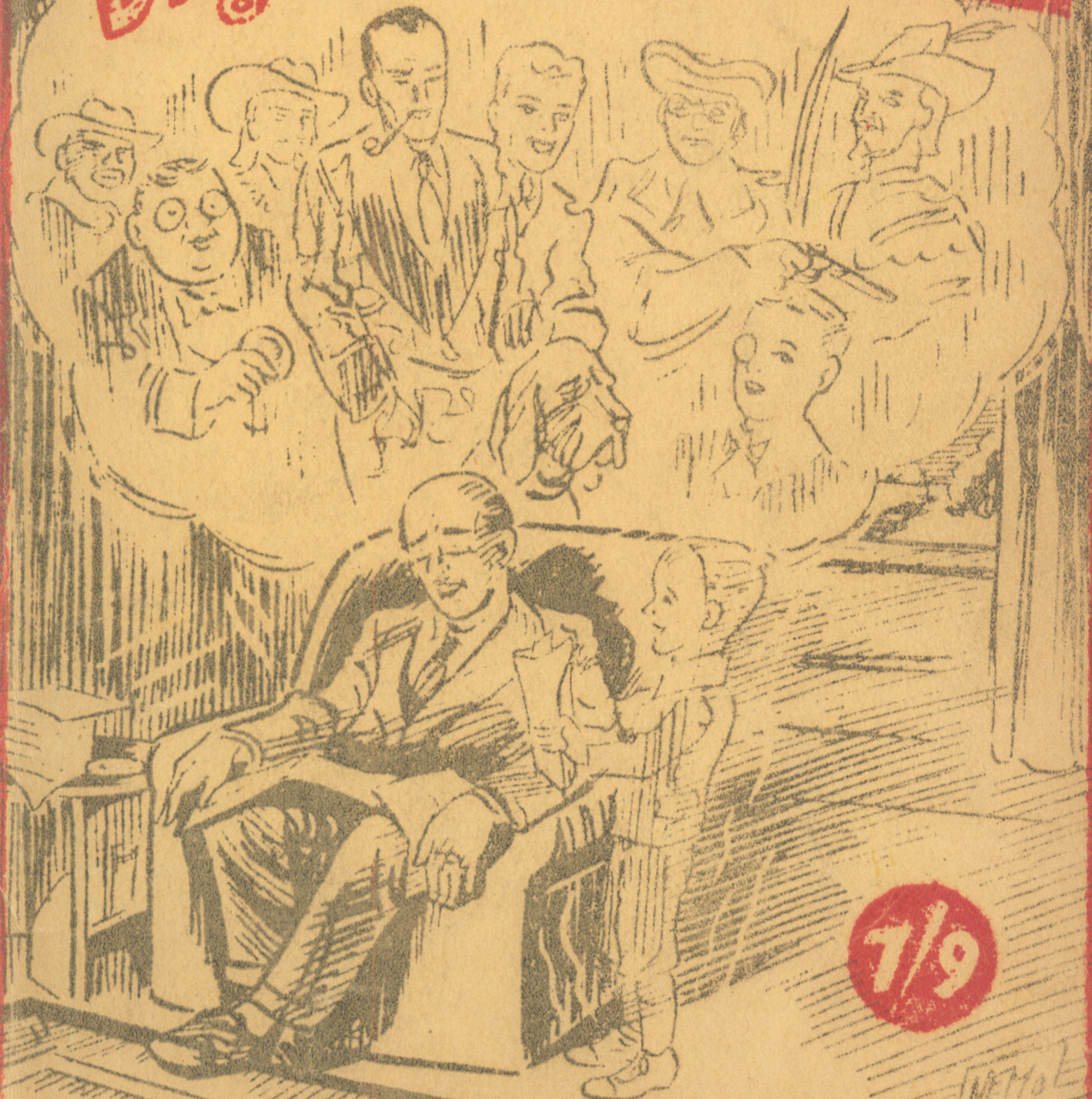


Collector's Digest

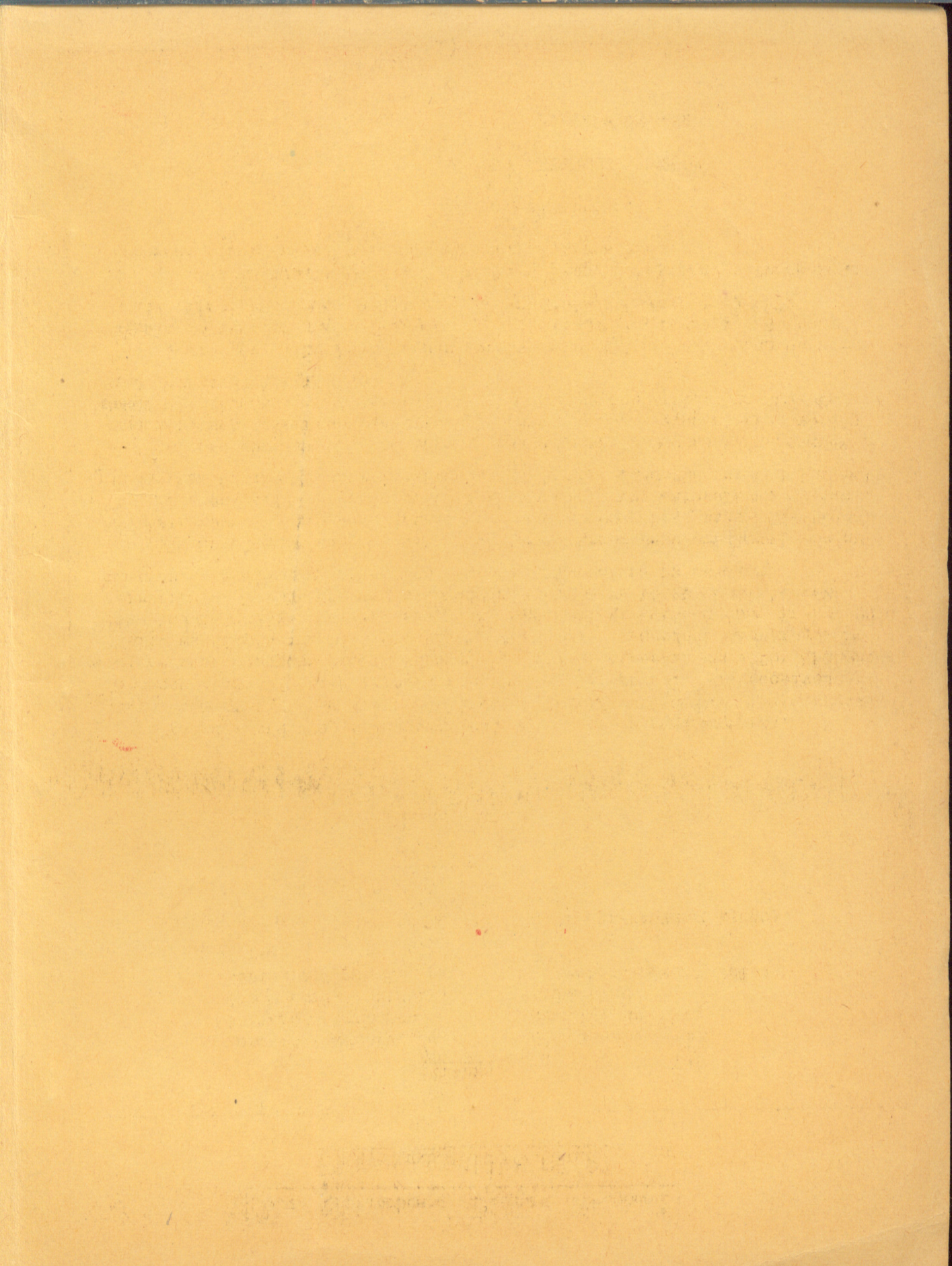
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The Collectors' Digest Annual
Christmas 1948 (No.2)

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FOREWORD

Dear Fellow Collectors,

It can safely be said our first Annual was a real success. We shall not easily forget our feelings of gratification when the congratulations began to pour in immediately after Christmas. We received just one adverse comment from a reader who said he expected more for his money. Well, we didn't trouble to reply to that one. Instead, encouraged by the knowledge that we had scored, we immediately settled down to the preparation of No. 2 with the determination to make it if possible even better. Whether we have succeeded or not remains to be seen.

We have again had splendid help from a grand band of loyal contributors, some of whom have joined our ranks during the year. We thank them one and all, with a special word to those two enthusiasts across the seas, William Gander in Canada, and Gordon Kirby in far off Australia.

We are sure it will be agreed that we have among us quite a number who know how to write a good readable article, and also several really skilful artists. And all help with no thought of gain, but just for the love of a hobby.

There were others, too, who submitted articles, but which we were unable to use for lack of space. To these our apologies. However, their efforts will not be wasted, for there's always the monthly.

In conclusion, the old, old wish, a Happy Christmas, a Prosperous New Year, and, may we add, may your collections grow.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY

H. MAURICE BOND

Contents

	Pages
Foreword	1
Contents	2
The Authors Who's Who.. .. . (by Herbert Leckenby)	3-20
Friendly Rivals	20
Dwellers in the Greyfriars Remove .. (by Wm.H.Gander)	21-27
Reprinted Stores in the Sexton Blake Library (by William Colcombe)	28-29
Heigh-Ho the Holly (by Eric Fayne)	30-32
Collectors Who's Who (by Herbert Leckenby)	33-46
One Story, Two Publishers	46&78
The Golden Days of the "Gem" .. (by Leonard Packman)	47-48
The History of the "Popular" .. (by Roger M.Jenkins)	49-52
With Blake on their Spot (by William Colcombe)	53-56
Mr.Croft Passes By (by Jack Corbett)	57-65
The Hobby Again (by Reginald Cox)	66-67
Girls in the Lime Light (by Gordon Kirby)	68-70
Topicality was the Keynote.. .. . (by H.M.Bond)	71-75
I Travelled for the St.Frank's League (by James W.Cook)	76-78
Dr.Ferraro and his Creator.. .. . (by Rex Dolphin)	79-81
Title Curiosities.	81
Post War Xmas at Baker Street (by H.M.Bond)	82-88
Special request to Readers.. .. .	88
A Look at the Libraries (by Herbert Leckenby)	89-97
Nipper of St.Ninians (by Herbert Leckenby)	97

ILLUSTRATIONS

Stacey Blake.	5
Sidney Drew and Henry Farmer	8
Paul Herring.	12
Henry Johnson	14
Herbert Maxwell	15
Mr.Prout (Branton)	20a
Sexton Blake. (W.Darwin)	56
Nine Impressions.. .. . (Robert H.Whiter)	60a
Frontispiece. (Nemo)	Front

The Authors Who's Who

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby
(with acknowledgements to Len. M. Allen,
Harry Dowler and others for valuable help)

It will be found that the great majority of the authors whose names appear here are those who were in their hey-day in the first quarter or so of the present century. There is a reason for this. Publishers of boys' journals in the Victorian era like Edwin J. Brett, Charles Fox and Guy Raynor did not believe in giving their authors much publicity. Frequently serials appeared without any name at all and when they did it was merely a line of type. There were a few exceptions like Bracebridge, Hemyng and Harcourt Burrage, and earlier, Thomas Peckett Prest, who wrote many of the notorious Lloyds "bloods", but the lot could almost be counted on the fingers.

One could perhaps exclude James Henderson from a list of those publishers who adopted this short-sighted policy, at any rate in the latter years of his firm at Red Lion House. In the "nineties" papers like "Nuggets" did let their readers know something about "Roland Quiz", Murray Graydon, Capt. Maitland and others on their staff.

But it was not until Alfred Harmsworth entered the field in 1893 with the "Marvel" that the authors found a place in the sun. This was emphasised when the "Boys' Friend" was launched in 1894 with Robert Hamilton Edwards in the editorial chair. For years he boosted authors - including himself - in the headline, foot-note and editorial column. This shrewd policy was followed when Pearson's started the "Big Budget". Both Arthur Brooke (A.C. Marshall) and Hamilton Edwards frequently published photographs and short biographical sketches of their authors - and artists - thus adding greatly to the interest of the stories. That it was a good policy is proved by the fact that to-day men who were at school in Victorian and Edward VII days remember the authors and artists of the time with pleasure and affection. Frequently old stagers write to me and ask "Who was Sidney Drew?", "Can you give me a list of David Goodwin's school stories?", and so on. My contention is further proved by the fact that when the A.P. at long last decided to reveal the authors of the Sexton Blake stories the policy created an enormous amount of interest. The merits of the more prominent of them, Hamilton Teed, Robert Murray, Gwyn Evans, E.S. Brookes and others were discussed and argued about, making the "Round Table" in the U.J. worth its price for that reason alone.

Then when Mr. F. Addington Symonds started the "Champion" in 1922 he was quick to follow the example of Hamilton Edwards and the editor he had so much admired in his youth, Arthur Brooke. Compare the "Champion" under his regime with what it became in later years and then dare say that it didn't deteriorate. The stories may have been as good but they didn't appear so for all the personality and intimacy had gone.

The same applies to all the papers for boys of the present day. Can you visualise anyone writing to the editor of the "Collectors' Digest" in 1978 and saying "What a good author ----- was who was writing for ----- when I was a boy". Of course you can't.

Now just a word about the pen names which are given wherever possible. This is something which has intrigued me for years, and the information has been got together in various ways; a decided style which easily betrayed the writer hiding another name; slips on the parts of the editorial staff; admissions from authors and editors themselves and the help of good friends with a similar bent.

I used to wonder why authors already popular under one name wanted to write under another, or others; on occasion one could understand it when he was writing for a different type of paper, as David Goodwin wrote for "Answers", for instance, or when Henry St. John changed his Christian name to Mabel when penning a serial for the "Girls' Friend". But why was he Henry St. John one week in the "Boys' Friend" and Lieut. Lefevre another? Then there was John N. Pentelow. As will be seen he had a string of pseudonyms, yet his style was so distinctive that one could place him no matter what name he wrote under almost as easily as we could recognise a photograph of W.G. Grace.

Some of the names appeared in early issues of the "C.D." in the feature "Authors and Their Pen Names". We were unable to continue that feature and we thought it best to have them all together in one comprehensive list for those who love to linger over the magic names of the men who charmed them in the days of yore; Maxwell Scott, Harcourt Burrage, Henry St. John, Stephen Agnew; they have passed on but their memories are with us still.

AGNEW, STEPHEN H: Took up the Aldine Dick Turpin stories where Charlton Lea left off. Lea's stories were full-blooded enough, but Agnew had him beaten hollow. Here are some of his titles - "The Crime of the Golden Cross", or "The Red Spiders of Seville"; "The Mystery of a Madstone" or "In the Clutch of the Inquisition"; "In Toils of Terror" or "The Man in the Crimson Cloak"; "The Dance of Death" or "The Chase of the Great Pink Pearl"; and here is an example of his picturesque description of a country road at eventide:-
"Hard gripped by the chill January evening a strange silence held sway over the lonely Great North Road. In the far distance a grey haze of smoke, curling in spirals through the thin air into a sullen sky betokened Northampton, but otherwise the bleak countryside was given over to an almost primeval solitude and gloom. For mile upon mile the untrodden snow stretched away like a winding sheet and the leafless trees stuck their gaunt, white laden arms upwards, as if appealing for mercy from the sombre clouds that hung heavy and ragged overhead. As far as the eye could see no living thing was to be seen on the frozen waste; saving only for an evil black rook that drifted with hoarse, melancholy croak and clamourous flapping of wings through the still air of evening."

Then when Dick Turpin and his band came along things began to happen. Penned numerous other stories for Aldines. Also wrote for "Chums". An announcement in that paper in 1915 gave the news that he had been killed in action on the Western front.

BIRD RICHARD Schoolboy story author's "nom de plume"; real name William Barradale-Smith. Contributed many short and serial stories to "The Captain", "Chums", "B.O.P."; also contributed many adult stories to "The Strand" and similar magazines. Although his school yarns were primarily humorous, they always had a strong humane interest and a profound knowledge of the schoolboy, Bird being a schoolmaster by profession. Stories include "The Morleigh Mascot", "The Ripswayd Ring", "The Ace of Stamps", "Hooligan Hall", "The Sporting House", "Dipcote Skippers", "The Big Five at Ellerby". An Omnibus volume of the Bird school stories has been published by Mitford.

BLAIR ALLAN - real name William J. Bayfield. His first serial appeared in the "Boys' Friend" in 1901 entitled "Pluck Will Tell". This had a Scot for hero and was followed by "Only a Highland Laddie" and "A Lad of the Lowlands" which appeared in the "Boys' Realm". Poor boy climbing the success ladder was a favourite theme of his, for others which appeared in the "Boys' Friend" and companion papers were "A Boy in a Thousand", "A Lad o' Liverpool", "A Boy of Birmingham" and "Only a Jew Boy". There were several others of various types.

Also wrote quite a number of Sexton Blake stories. In these you will find that Blake usually addressed Tinker as "laddie" which seems to suggest that Allan Blair had Scots blood in him remembering also the stories mentioned above. One of Hamilton Edwards' best discoveries.

BLAKE STACEY (born Bradford 1878). . . Some of his best stories concerned Moreton Stowe, Special Correspondent", which first appeared in the "Big Budget" at the beginning of the century. When the "Champion" was started twenty years later Mr. Addington Symonds, its lively editor, engaged Blake to revive the character. Other popular characters he created were Captain Kettle Jr., (Big Budget) and Captain Christmas for the "Penny Pictorial".



Stacey Blake also wrote several **Sexton Blake** yarns into some of which he introduced Captain Christmas. Other serials of his were "Black Diamonds" (Boys' Leader), and "Wilbur Wright's Apprentice" (Boys' Friend).

Mr. Addington Symonds describes him as a keen faced man with twinkling eyes and a great sense of humour.

BLYTH HARRY Known to fame as the writer of the first Sexton Blake story. It has been stated that the name has been coined by some unknown member of the Harmsworth staff and that Blyth was commissioned to write a story round it, but one likes to think that it was the author himself that gave to the world the unique name around which more words have been written than any other in English literature. Actually wrote the first story - 1/2d. "Marvel" Dec. 13th/1893 under pen name, Hal Meredith. Wrote many stories of various types for the Harmsworth 1/2d. papers. Invariably started his story with the spoken word. "Mr. Frank Ellaby wishes to see you, sir." "Good," answered Sexton Blake." Blyth, it has been stated, died at an early age.

BRISBANE COUTTS Probably not his real name and he had several other pen ones including Reid Whitley. Wrote numerous Blake stories and created Dr. Ferraro. Said an editor who knew him - "Big, jovial, happy-go-lucky, a man with some extraordinary ideas for stories especially in the realms of fantastic fiction. The merest sketch of an idea from the editor was enough to produce an elaborately worked out yarn, full of excitement and surprises."

BRANDON JOHN G. (born Australia 1876). One of the most prolific of the Sexton Blake authors in the 1930's; also contributed to "The Thriller". To-day writes "whodunits" for the bound book class. Locale was usually this country but could write equally well of foreign climes. Titles include "The Sign of the Serpent", "The Secret of the Surgery", "The Red Vendetta", "The Blue Print Murders", "The Mystery of the Murdered P.C.", "The Mystery of the Green Bottle", "The Apache", "The Pigeon Loft Crime". His favourite creation for the S.B. yarns was the "Hon. Ronald Purvale".

BROOKES EDWY SEARLES Pen names, Robert W. Comrade, Charles Wentworth, etc. Best known for his St. Frank stories in the Nelson Lee Library, for they ran for 16 years. Nelson Lee was a very different character in E.S.B.'s hands to what he had been in Maxwell Scott's, his creator, and often only a shadowy figure in the Library which bore his name. The plots were very often very fantastic, but nevertheless very popular and much sought for to-day. Wrote several series of stories about the detective before taking him to St. Frank's College - "The Green Triangle", "Jim the Penman", "Eileen Dare" among them. Also created Waldo the Wonder Man", opponent, sometimes friend of Sexton Blake.

As Robert W. Comrade wrote "The Iron Island" and "The Brotherhood of Iron" two of his best efforts, also "In Trackless Space" which first appeared as a serial in the N.L. Library, later published complete in the B.F. 4d. series. Wrote many Blue Crusader footer stories for Boys' Realm. Of late years his stories appear with the dignity of stiff covers. As Berkeley Grey he describes the adventures of Norman Conquest, nothing to do with 1066, for Norman is a modern adventurer, who first came before the public through the medium of "The Thriller". Also as Victor Gunn writes Inspector Ironsides, another "Thriller" creation.

BULLIVANT CECIL HENRY - (born 1882). Editor Boys' Herald 1904-7. Wrote numerous stories for Amalgamated Press papers as Maurice Everard. Other pen names Henry Turville, Robert W. Dixon and Alice Millard.

BURRAGE E. HARCOURT (born 1839). One of the most prolific of the Victorian authors. Wrote countless school stories including the famous "Island School" and "Lambs of Littlecote" for Aldine Co. about 1895, stories which were re-published again and again. He himself went to a school in Norfolk which he admitted was of very little account. Also wrote hundreds of adventure stories of all descriptions. To-day's grandfathers remember with affection "Handsome Harry", "Ching-Ching", and the rest of the merry crew of the "Fighting Belvedere".

In 1888 started, edited and wrote nearly all the serials for "Ching-Ching's Own", a paper which had quite a good run.

In the early years of the present century was adopted by Hamilton Edwards. This was rather surprising for he had always been identified with the "bloods", papers which made H.E. raise his hands in horror.

Nevertheless "Ching Ching", "Handsome Harry and Co." suddenly appeared in the "Boys' Realm" in a series of long complete stories, given front page status and other publicity. Several serials also appeared including "Tom Tarter at School" (re-published years later as a serial in the Nelson Lee) and "The Fengate Schoolboys". All these stories were probably re-prints. Strange fellow, Hamilton Edwards. Burrage also wrote another serial entitled "The Island School", this time for girls. It appeared in the "Girls' Realm" in 1910. Died March 6th 1916 at 168 Station Road, Redhill, Surrey.

CARR KENT Writer of school stories in the early 1900s. Considered by R.A.H. Goodyear to be one of the best in this period. Serial stories appeared in "Boys of Our Empire" - "Hounded Out" and "The Outsider".

CLEAVER HYLTON (born London, 1891). First appeared in "The Captain" in 1913 with a short story "The Red Rag". A keen sportsman, his stories included many sporting events. Was with The Sportsman's Battalion in the 1914/18 War, wounded, all the while contributing to the magazine both short and serial stories. Wrote also many adult novels - "Gay Charade", "Fogbound" etc., now devotes his time to journalism. School stories include "Roscoe Makes Good", "Brother O' Mine", "Second Innings" (first appeared under title "Lucky Lorimer"), "The Old Order", "Forbidden Study" and many Harley yarns such as "Captains of Harley", "The Harley First XV". Wrote also for the "Modern Boy" and under the pen name of Reginald Crunden for "Chums". Several series of his articles appeared in the latter such as "Touchline and Track" and "Listen to the Coach".

DARRAN MARK Real name Norman Goddard. On the inside staff of the A.P. - had a terrific output. For a long period in the anonymous days he and Murray Graydon almost shared Sexton Blake stories in the "Union Jack" between them. He created Inspector Spearing, one of the most obtuse of the several Yard men who worked with Blake, and a great butt for Tinker.

Darren also wrote a long series of stories for "Pluck" in which Spearing appeared as a smart, alert young policeman. Wrote several other detective stories including those concerning "John Smith" of "Daring & Co."

Norman Goddard was killed in World War No. 1.

DAUNT ATHERLEY - concentrated on stories of the stage only. He was evidently of the profession himself for they had the real atmosphere. His "Harry Brandon, Actor" (Boys' Friend) and its sequel "Facing the Footlights" (Boys' Herald) were really first class. Wrote two other serials nearly as good, "Everybody's Favourite" (Boys' Realm) and "Fiddler Dick" (Boys' Herald), also a number of complete music-hall yarns for "Pluck" about 1906. His real name was unknown, but there is a possibility he was really Arthur S. Hardy.

DREW SIDNEY (born 1878). His real name was Edgar Joyce Murray. For many years a popular writer in Pearsons' and Harmsworth magazines (A.Press). He created "Graydon Garth", millionaire, inventor and Empire Builder. First story about him appeared in "The Big Budget" in 1897 - "The Vanished Fleet". Amongst others which followed were "A World in Arms", "The Mysterious Army" and "Peril Island". Fine stuff these. Created for the

"Boys' Friend" a similar character - "Ferrers Lord". First story "Wolves of the Deep", followed by a sequel "Lion against Bear" appeared in the 1st. series. Numerous others followed in the 1d. "Boys' Friend" and companion papers including "Beyond the Eternal Ice", "Through Trackless Tibet", "The Blue Orchid" and "Twice Round the Globe" (Jester). Also wrote many stories of Ranthorpe and Calcroft schools.



The old B.B.
will be the record for all pen'ish in the near or
any other Century. Again a joyous Xmas -

Sidney Drew

Wrote in microscopic but very clear hand (specimen herewith) and often gave his editors headache owing to the late arrival of next instalment. Was writing for "The Champion" in 1923, also penned quite a number of Sexton Blake stories.

Many old-timers remember and reverence him still.

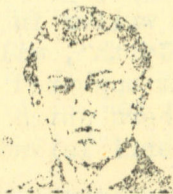
EDWARDS ROBERT HAMILTON (born 1872, d. 1932). The famous editor, of course. Was more successful in the role of editor than author for his stories were very crude, particularly his first "Britain in Arms" and "The Russian Foe". He followed with "Only a Pit Boy", "The Road to Fame" and "Silver Blaze". All these appeared in the 1d. "Boys' Friend". Some years later he made a great splash with two serials which he was supposed to write - with the help of Allan Blair. They were "Always Honest" and "Honesty Wins" and appeared in the "Boys' Herald". If he was honest he would probably have admitted that Blair did the greater part of the work.

EVANS GWYN - One of the most popular of the Sexton Blake authors. It was he who made Mrs. Bardell into a real character, - a modern Mrs. Malprop. Also created "Splash" Page, the dynamic reporter of the "Daily Radio". Had a slick, racy style and was fond of fantastic bizarre plots. These started off with a bang but one got the impression that he sometimes lost interest in his story and finished it in a half-hearted fashion. This impression is supported by one of his editors who said of him in a strikingly candid criticism.

"A mercurial temperament, brilliant, enthusiastic, but unstable. Caused trouble by his unreliable habits, his unpunctuality and his moods. A charming personality, affable and obliging, always bubbling over with ideas - many of them extremely clever but had to be watched and followed up, one could never be sure of him."

Poor Gwyn Evans. He loved life and died long before his time.

FARMER HENRY Was educated at Harrow and Oxford University. At the latter represented his college as an oarsman. In later life had some stage experience. As an author who was on the "Big Budget" staff from the beginning and for years he was seldom absent from its pages. His serials were real gripping stuff, included "The Flying Phantom", "A Felon's Gold", "In the Grip of the Law", "The Shadow of Vengeance", "The Serpent's Coil", and "Galbraith of St. Anselm's" also many complete stories. In later years he wrote "The Fatal Glass" for the "Boys' Friend". One who knew him described him as one of the kindest of men and a true friend.



Tim said - God
re!
Henry Farmer

FENN CLIVE R. Son of the famous Victorian writer, George Manville Fenn. Contributed to "The Boys' Herald", "Cheer, Boys, Cheer", "Boys' Journal", etc. Also wrote several St. Jim's stories under the pen name, Martin Clifford.

FORDWYCH JOHN EDMUND Real name Harold J. Garrish, a member of the A.P. who two or three years ago completed 50 years service and may be there still. Was one of the earliest editors of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. U.J. and companions. Wrote stories then under his real name and with slight variations. Was amazingly prolific and for years he and E. Newton Bungay wrote almost all the serials in "Chips" and "Comic Cuts" and others of the type between them. Some of his best work appeared in the "Jester" including "Daddy, the Convict Earl" and "Spring-healed Jack".

As Harry Belbin wrote the famous "Cooky Scrubbs" stories which had a long run in the early Id. "Pluck" and were later re-published in the "Wonder" and the "Boys' Friend". Had a real gift for blending real adventure with delightfully quiet, dry humour.

GILSON CHARLES (Captain) A prolific writer of adventure stories. Well travelled, all his yarns bear the stamp of authenticity. Wrote for practically all of the boys' papers including "Chums", "The Captain" and the leading A.P. publications. Titles, indicative of his themes, "The Secret Society of the Map", "The Red Tribe".

GOODWIN DAVID (born in 1878) - Not his real name, but the one by which he was best known to readers of the A.P. boys' papers. Other pen names John Tregellis, and John Goodwin - the latter when writing for "Answers" and other adult papers. Real name Sidney Gowing. One of the most brilliant of all the authors under the Hamilton Edwards banner. In the hey-day of the serial story was supreme in the art of leaving the reader **in a state of suspense at the end of an instalment.** First serials - "The Boy Barge Owners" (1903) for the "Boys' Friend" and "Gunfleet Jim" for the "Boys' Realm", then on for twelve years or more continuously, but for the A.P. papers only. Was amazingly versatile and never wrote a poor story. Examples: "On Turpin's Highway", "Middies of the Fearless", "Dan of Dogger Bank", "Rajah Dick", "A Lancashire Lad", "Barred", (his first school story), and several stories of St. Simeon's School. As John Tregellis wrote those remarkable "War with Germany" stories long before 1914. First "Britain Invaded" (Boys' Friend - 1906) followed by two sequels. These ran for two years. Others, "Kaiser or King", "Flying Armada", and "Legions of the Kaiser". Latter was running in August/1914:

Was not obliged to work for a living but did not believe in being idle, which was lucky for boys of 40 years ago. When last heard of was in Kenya.

GOODYEAR ROBERT ARTHUR HANSON (born 1877). Began authorship while at school with verses in "Best for Boys", "Ching Ching's Own", and with short stories in children's magazines. Wrote serial for the "Boys' Friend" when 17, and later penned many stories for Henderson's "Nugget Library". Was then also on the outside staff of the "Athletic News" and two other sporting newspapers, chiefly as football representative. Contributed every week in his teens to "Tit-Bits", "Cassell's Saturday Journal" and "Pearson's Weekly". Has since childhood enjoyed many

successes in literary prize contests, including £1000 for a "Blighty" Limerick last line. Also wrote a large number of fine school stories which were ideal as prizes. These can now be found in most public libraries, they actually are often "out", so popular are they with the boys of to-day. They are rollicking stories with a skilful blend of adventure, sport and droll humour. Titles include "The Captain and the Kings", "Fifth Form at Beck House", "The New Boy at Baxtergate", "Three Joskins at St. Judes", "Up Against the School", "With Wat at Wintergleam", "Forge at Foxenby", "Tom at Tollbar School", "The Four Schools", "Boys of Castle Cliff School". Some of these and others have recently been re-printed. Died suddenly November 25th, 1948.

CRAYDON WILLIAM MURRAY - (born Feb. 4th, 1864, at Harrisberg, Pennsylvania). Pen name Alfred Armitage. His output was stupendous over a period of half-a-century. In later years used a dictaphone hours on end. Wrote for Henderson's, Aldines, Shurey's, Amalgamated Press and other publishers. Seemed to know every country in the world and wrote stories laid in most of them. Probably penned more Sexton Blake stories than anyone else, including at least two serials - "Sexton Blake on the Congo" and "Across the Equator". Had his own Yard men, "Inspector Widgeon", also several other private detectives, including "Carfax Baines", "Gordon Fox", and "Abel Link".

Usually made Tinker address Blake as "Guv'nor" or sir and the detective answered with "my boy". Was fond of the word "vowed" and invariably a character "choked with emotion" or "a lump rose in his throat". Wrote his historical stories usually as "Alfred Armitage".

GRAY ANDREW. - One of the old timers, wrote for most of the A.P. papers - "Boys' Friend", "Boys' Realm", "Boys' Herald", "Cheer, Boys, Cheer", "Boys' Journal", etc. Main theme the dramatic story, titles self explanatory, such as "Midst London's Millions", "Pitfalls of London". Also wrote school stories on similar lines - "The Scourge of the School" and "Despised by the School".

HADATH GUNBY Schoolmaster, lyric writer, author. Best known for his public school stories with a strong humane interest. First wrote for "The Captain" in 1909 and regularly contributed until the final volume; also wrote many stories for "Chums". Omnibus school-story volume published by Milford; several stories translated into Braille and other languages. Pen name John Mowbray. Titles include "Sparrow in Search of Expulsion", "Sparrow in Search of Fame", "Sparrow Gets Going", "Pulling His Weight", "New School at Shropp", "Carey of Cobhouse", "Go Bang Garry", "Fattest Head in the Fifth", "His Highness of Highfield", "Against the Clock", "The Swinger", "March of Time", and adventure yarns "St. Palfrey's Cross", "The Seventh Swordsman", "Twenty Good Ships". Latest "Fortune Lane" filmed. In his day well known club cricketer for the Gentlemen of Surrey and with P.G. Wodehouse regularly appeared for the authors v Publishers march each year.

FOR SALE: Gem Volumes (Nos. 992 - 1663) all delightfully bound; Chums Volumes; Modern Boys. Offers invited.

Frank Snell, Rathgar, 6, Chingswell Street, Bideford, Devon.

HAMILTON CHARLES To state that he was Frank Richards of "Billy Bunter" fame, Martin Clifford who created "Tom Merry" and the rest of the dwellers at "St. Jim's, Owen Conquest of the "Rookwood School" stories, is like saying "W.G. Grace was a cricketer". However, an Author's Who's Who of Boys' stories without him would be as bad as Hamlet without the Prince.

Most people know too that he was Ralph Redway who wrote the popular "Rio Kid" yarns, and the Hilda Richards who first wrote the words about "Bessie Bunter", sister of Billy. Not so well known, perhaps, is the fact that in the long ago he wrote a series of circus stories which appeared in "Pluck" under the name of Harry Dorrian. Has been writing stories to delight the hearts of boys for over fifty years - over 3000 altogether. A brilliant serial, "King Cricket", was one of the "Boys' Realm's" most successful stories. "Rivals of St. Kit's", another serial, appeared in "Pluck".

Still going strong, despite the fact that he has passed the allotted span, "Bunter" books adorn the bookstalls but don't long remain there. The blind follow Billy's adventures in Braille and probably ere long, his burly form will be seen on the screen. Quite a lot of nobodies have written their autobiographies and had them published; Charles Hamilton wrote his and it hasn't appeared yet, which seems to prove there is something wrong in the publishing world.

HAMILTON MAX Masculine name but an editor once stated that it concealed the identity of a women writer. Had other pen names too, including T.G. Dowling Maitland and Tristan K. Monck. Wrote several serials including "The Bully of St. Simon's", the second school story in the "Boys' Realm", "A Pit Hero" (Boys' Herald) and "The Streets of London" (Union Jack). Also numerous adventure and complete stories for various A.P. papers. Could tell a good story but pulled a long bow occasionally. A front page of the "Boys' Realm" showed a remarkable incident in "The Bully of St. Simon's". In a fight on the edge of a cliff a boy has been knocked over but instead of being crushed to earth on the rocks below, his fall was broken by the solitary stump of a tree hooking his belt. Reading that as a boy I remember saying, "Coa, that takes some believing".

HARDY ARTHUR S. Second to none as a writer of sport stories, especially football. His "Blue Crusaders" and sequels in the "Boys' Realm" were amongst the finest stories on the game ever written. Also wrote among others "The Young Captain" which started in No.1 of the 1/2d. "Boys' Friend", 1895, "The Outcasts" appeared in the final number of the same series. Created "Tom Sayers", actor and middle weight champion of the world. Stories about him ran in the "Marvel" for years. Had stage experience himself.

Mr. F. Addington Symonds, who employed Hardy, says of him:- "You asked him for - say - a football story and you never bothered to mention the plot or construction. He'd just nod, and say, "I know, can do Monday week?" and the story would be on the Editor's desk according to specification. Competent, conscientious worker if a little unconventional". Hardy was another of the numerous Sexton Blake authors. Many readers of the 1916/1924 period will remember that it was assumed that the author was really the famous Aston Villa goal-keeper, Sam Hardy, a rumour which did not detract from the sales of his football yarns.

HARVEY ROSS One of the most popular writers for "Chums" in the 1920's. Main themes were football and school stories. Was excellent with the series of complete stories so favoured at that time. Titles include "Saving the Rovers", "Outlaws and Rustlers", "Mayo's Term", "White Wings", "The Dud's Term".

HAYTER CECIL A great traveller himself, wrote many capital stories of adventure in many lands for the A.P. papers, including "The Unknown Seas", "Against Time", "Ned Kelly" and "Trooper and Bushranger". Also penned a large number of Sexton Blake yarns, creating "Spots Losely" and "Lobengu", the Zulu. To him went the credit of the three serials in the "Boys' Herald", "Sexton Blake at School", "Sexton Blake in the Sixth", "Sexton Blake at Oxford", in the latter of which Sexton Blake again met Tinker "for the first time". He was also responsible for "Derwent Duff" that immaculate detective who appeared for so many years in the "Penny Pictorial".

Hayter died many years ago and long afterwards the three Blake stories mentioned above were re-published in the "Boys' Friend" Library with "John Andrews" given as the author.

HEATHCOTE CLAUDE Real name J. Harwood Panting. Wrote mainly school and circus stories. One of them "The Scapegrace of Swishell School" appeared in the first numbers of the 1st "Boys' Friend". Others in that paper were "Stars of the Circus" and "Wal, the Boy Acrobat", the latter re-published several times. Wrote also for the Pearson papers, and, under his own name, school stories to lend variety to the "Sunday Companion".

HEMYNG BRACEBRIDGE (b. 1841 - d. 1901). With the possible exception of E. Harcourt Burrage was the most popular and best remembered of the writers of Boys' journals in the Victorian era, journals of what is known as the 'blood' class, that is. Was educated at Eton and became a Barrister of the Middle Temple, but it has been stated, never held a brief.

Wrote the famous "Jack Harkaway" stories, which in their day meant so much to boys as the "Tom Merry", "Billy Bunter" and "Sexton Blake" do to 20th century ones. So great a sensation did they create that Hemyng was persuaded to go to America where he met with a reception almost akin to Lindbergh of Atlantic flying fame, and caused as much bitter controversy between rival publishers as a modern film star over a scenario.

Wrote numerous other stories, including "Schooldays of Jack at Eton".

HERRING PAUL Had the distinction of writing the first story in the 1st Union Jack (1894). "The Silver Arrow". This was followed by many others for this paper and its two companions. In one unique series in "Pluck" had a character re-born in seven different periods of English history. Was another who was also writing for Pearson's at the same time. In the "Big Budget" wrote a number of stories concerning "Kit Carson" a Buffalo Bill type of character, fine Wild West atmosphere. Also wrote a few of the very early "Sexton Blake" stories; occasionally called the detective by his Christian name only, which was rather unusual.



*Comrade's hand
your chem
Paul Herring*

HINCKS C. MALCOLM (born 1881). Pen name Malcolm Dayle, John M. Howard and others, including some feminine ones. Was a sub-editor on the "Big Budget" under Arthur Brooke and wrote many stories for that paper and the "Boys' Leader". Had a delightful crisp style and was adept at getting his heroes into tight corners and out again, without any absurdities. Wrote also for the "Boys' Friend" and two of his serials "The Odds Against Him" and "On and Up Road" were two of the best ever written for that paper.

Had few superiors as a writer of sport stories, especially football, writing numerous serials for "Football and Sports Favourite", "Sports Budget", etc. In the days when girls took it into their heads to play football he wrote several stories around the quaint idea and made them interesting too, a real tribute to his art.

One more of the "Sexton Blake" band of authors.

HOOK S. CLARKE - Samuel, his Christian name. Black bearded and burly. Nephew of the famous Theodore Hook. Wrote for almost all of the boys' papers of his time. Best known to fame for his "Jack, Sam and Pete" stories which ran for 20 years in the "Marvel". Record was all the more remarkable because it was almost the same story every week. An editor who knew him said he was a happy-go-lucky writer who once let the comrades find a 'pub' in the middle of the jungle and who would cheerfully bring in a giraffe in the Arctic, or a bear in the desert. Owing to the success of "Jack, Sam and Pete" created others on similar lines, but they were very short-lived.

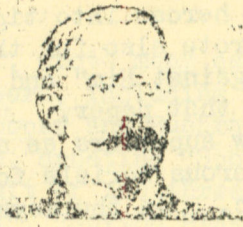
Wrote scores of school stories with broad humour predominating, occasionally used pen name - Maurice Merriman and probably others.

HORLER SIDNEY The famous thriller and sporting writer wrote infrequently for several boys' papers, with school stories and football yarns. Several of the latter appeared in "Chums", "Sports Budget" and the monthly Aldines. Probably his finest "soccer" yarn was "Goal" which appeared as a serial in "Football Weekly", and has been re-published as a bound book many times. Others were "The Great Game", "The Breed of the Beverleys", "McPhee", "Exploits of Peter". "On the Ball", "The Streak", "The Football Funk".

HUNTER JOHN (born 1891). Pen names Peter Meriton, L.H. Brenning and Anthony Drummond. One of the Sexton Blake band of authors. Contributed for many years to practically all of the boys' papers with sporting, adventure and detective yarns, also to "Topical Times". Created the character of 'Captain Dack' for the Sexton Blake stories. First became prominent after World War I with serial stories to "Chums". Stories must run into hundreds, amongst them "The Masked Champion" (boxing) "For Honour of the Team" (football), "King of the Speedway" (motor-racing), "Before Midnight" (adventure), "Gold from Colorado" (adventure), "Buccaneer's Gold" (pirates). At present writing bound books under pen name, but still obliges with a Sexton Blake story in the new 7d. series.

WANTED: Information on Characters, Titles of Chapters 1, 2 and 3, of O'er Land and Sea, No.209, Buffalo Bill's Sharpshooters.
P. Smith, The Stores, Mumby, Near Alford, Lincs.

JOHNSON HENRY T. (born 1858). Author with an amazing output. Wrote scores of serials for Pearson's, Harmsworth's, Aldine and other publishers. Was equally at home with tales of Ancient Rome, Middle Ages, stage, school, sport or circus. His most famous was "The Pride of the Ring". This had a curious history - it first appeared in the "Funny Wonder" in the later years of the nineties and ran for three years. About 1905 the Aldine Co. published it in book form at 6d. Then the A.P. re-published it in the "Boys' Realm Football Library" under the title of "King of the Ring". About the same time Aldines also brought it out again in the "Boys' Own 3d. Library". Would appear that Henry T. Johnson was a business man and held the copyright. A few of his other stories taken at random were "The King Shall Have His Own Again", "Through Traitor's Gate", "The Scarlet Star", "Spangles and Sawdust", "The Drudge of Draycott School", and "The Almost Man".



*Wishing myself the
same. I remain until praised by the home
of lords for something they doubt, or that
somebody else has done while we have
been seeing they got on with their work.
H. T. Johnson*

The heroes were of the stage melodrama "Young England" type, his heroines rejected the villains with biting scorn, as per example from "Phil Gladwin, the Boy Actor": "Dolly" he said, "you drove me to it. I love you madly - passionately. Be mine and you are free at once. But - oh - when you spurn me my love turns to hate and I am capable of any act, however cruel."

"Go, Richard Bransome," she said, "Leave me here, a helpless persecuted captive, leave me here to die, only remember this, that I would prefer death itself rather than be yours."

Fancy Miss 1948 talking like that, or Miss 1898 for that matter. Nevertheless, it was good clean honest stuff, and editors served it up as quickly as he could write it.

Henry T. Johnson served a year as Mayor of Hammersmith, and in the word of a friend of his "was very proud of it".

JUDD ALFRED Primarily a school story writer. Contributed to "The Captain", "Chums" and similar mags., with short and serial stories. Titles include "Amber Skull", "Chums of Beechwood", "Nobody's Pal".

LEA CHARLTON Well remembered by readers of the Aldine publications of forty and fifty years ago. Was probably more responsible than any one for weaving a halo of romance round such doubtful heroes as Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, Jack Sheppard and others. Wrote the first 110 of the Dick Turpins and mingled hair raising deeds with sleep-stick humour. Penned numerous other old time yarns, including "Chronicles of Newgate". Charlton Lea was probably a pen name, but, if so, his real one is lost in the mists of time.

Advertise in the C.D.

MARSHALL ARTHUR C. As "Arthur Brooke" was editor of the "Big Budget" almost throughout its run. Was only eighteen when he took up the post. Was an example to all editors, for he took a real genuine interest in all his juvenile readers. Also wrote stories as Carras Yorke. For a time was the editor of the "Boys' Friend".

Someone who knew him well said of him:- "He was a well built, upright man, with a fine head, kindly smiling blue eyes and a quiet cultured voice. An expert horticulturist and a great lover of gardens, his home, on the outskirts of Hounslow was a paradise of colour.

A man with a real religious sense and a very high personal code, a real lover of his fellow men and a sincere believer in his work, a most general friend."

He died suddenly March 4th, 1945.

MART DONOVAN (born 1874). Real name, E. LeBreton Martin. Other pen name Raymond Lee. For years was a regular contributor to the pages of the "Big Budget" and the shorter lived "Boys' Leader". His stories included "King Como", "The Rival Bushrangers", "The League of Dread", "For Caesar or the Cross", and "Brothers or Foes". Under his real name wrote for papers like "Chums", "The Scout" and "The Captain". One of his stories "Boys of the Otter Patrol" written in the days of the Boy Scout movement attained great popularity and was re-published as a book suitable for a school prize. As Raymond Lee wrote numerous serials for "Big Budget", "Boys' Leader", etc.

Three or four years ago a short paragraph appeared in an obscure corner of a London evening paper. It read, "A feeble old man was knocked and killed in Kensington to-day. His name was E. Le Breton Martin, a journalist."

MAXWELL HERBERT Had the distinction of writing the very first Sexton Blake story in which Tinker was mentioned - "Cunning Against Skill", U.J. No.52 1d. series. Maxwell also wrote at least three serials in the "Boys' Friend" concerning the two famous characters "Sexton Blake in the Railway", "The Schoolmaster Detective" and "Sexton Blake in America", but to be candid, they did not rank high in the Blake lore.

Wrote several serials for the "Big Budget" including "The Terror of the Deep", "The Secret of the South", and "King of the Pigmies", the latter a modern Lilliput story. Could write a good yarn, but he had a curious jerky sort of style.



MURRAY ROBERT Son of William Murray Graydon. "Never did the mantle of a father fall more worthily on the son, in fact, in the opinion of many, Robert was greater than William. Sometimes wrote as Robert Graydon and one suspects that he was also Murray Roberts, author of the "Captain Justice" stories. Undoubtedly his greatest work was the Criminals' Confederation series in the "Union Jack". Had a capital, racy style, created plots which might appear fantastic, yet worked out smoothly and convincingly. Created other opponents for Sexton Blake, including Dr. Satira and Paul Cynos. Also wrote many football and school stories. Unfortunately, died at a comparatively early age.

OSBORNE MARK Real name John William Bobin, Other pseudonyms, John Ascott, Victor Nelson, and when writing for girls' papers - Adelle Ascot and Gertrude Nelson. Curious how many men wrote for girls' papers. Was one of the oldest staff writers on the A.P. and was writing before the first World War and continued until his death - April 19th/35, which took place in Southend, his home for many years.

Best known as writer of Sexton Blake stories for which he created popular characters, George Marsden Plummer and Aubrey Dexter. Also wrote many serials, especially about horse racing, a sport in which he was greatly interested. As Adelle Ascott he created the characters Valarie Drew, the girl detective and her dog "Flash".

PENTELOW JOHN NIX (born March 26th, 1872). Perhaps better known under some of his numerous pen names - Jack North, John West, Harry Huntingdon, Richard Randolph, Randolph Kyle were just a few of them. It was really futile trying to disguise himself, for he had such a distinctive style that his admirers, and he had many, could recognise him at a glance. Under his real name was busy writing for boys' papers in the late 1880's. His first appeared when he was about 15. For a period in the Kaiser War was editor of several of the A.P. papers, including the "Magnet" and "Gem", and wrote many of the St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories. His best school yarns, however, were those of Wycliffe and Haygarth. Splendid stuff these; but above all he will be remembered and revered for his cricket serials, the finest on the game ever written. Most of them appeared in the "Boys' Realm" and included "Smith of Rocklandshire", "Boy Bayley, Professional" and "Young Yardley", prophetic name for a cricketer, that. Apart from his stories, wrote extremely interesting articles on the King of Games, and was editor of "Cricket".

When he died many years ago there passed on one of the kindest and friendliest of men and many a man of mature years treasures letters penned by him.

PIKE MORTON Real name D. H. Perry. His speciality was the historical yarn and under his pen name wrote many fine ones for the "Boys' Friend" and the "Boys' Herald". First in the former was "The Red Rapiers" followed by a sequel "The Black Dragoons". Later several serials and completes about Robin Hood. Three of the serials were "Guy of the Greenwood" (Boys' Friend) "Longbows of England" (Boys' Herald) and "King of the Woodlands" (Boys' Friend). Most of his serials were illustrated by clever Val Reading, who was at his best with historical yarns. Under his real and pen name was a popular writer for "Chums" and other papers. Was an expert on military matters on which he wrote articles and also illustrated them.

POOLE MICHAEL Public school stories, contributor to "Chums", "The Captain" and similar mags. Also wrote several stories for the S.O. and B.F. 4d. Libraries. Many of his yarns also published in the bound book form, titles include "The Duffer of Danby", "The Wagoner's Halt Mystery", "The Sky Patrol", "Wake up, Marston"; occasionally would produce a Sexton Blake yarn.

A Happy Christmas to you all

QUIZ ROLAND (born 1833, died 1914). Real name Richard Martin Howard Quitterton. Author of the famous Tim Pippin stories which first appeared in Henderson's "Young Folks' Paper" and reprinted several times, delighting children of several decades.

REED TALBOT BAINES Author of school stories. Born 1852, died 1893. Son of a Knight and M.P. Later became director of the Reed Type Foundry. First articles and short stories were published in 1879 in the B.O.P., for which paper he annually reported the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race for many years. Although he was always a "day" boy at school, his descriptions of public school life were strictly accurate. Many of his short and serial stories appeared first in the B.O.P., later being re-published in book form, many re-printed to-day. Titles include, "The Adventures of a Three Guinea Watch", "The Fifth Form at St. Dominics" (probably the best known), "Willoughby Captains", "Reginald Crunden", "A Dog with a Bad Name", "Master of the Shell", "Sir Ludar", "Cook House at Felsgarth", - his last story was "Tom, Dick and Harry".

ROBINSON ERNEST H. Contributed to many A.P. papers, also Cassell's "Chums". An expert rifle shot himself he introduced the Sharpshooters' League which had a membership of thousands of boys. Chiefly wrote adventure stories both as serials and shorts, titles include "The Black-birder's Treasure", "From Schoolcap to Crown", "The Scarlet Ariel", "The Bamboo Rod". He also wrote many fine articles for boys' papers on such subjects as X-Ray, Radio. Reached the rank of Captain in World War I.

ROCHESTER GEORGE E. A very prolific writer who contributed to most of the latter-day A.P. papers such as "Modern Boy", "Champion", "Triumph"; also to the later volumes of the "B.O.P." Tackled any subject, adventure, school story and had a flair for the futuristic. Also wrote several yarns for "The Thriller" and his story "The Crimson Flash" was No. 1 of the short-lived, though regretted, "Thriller 4d. Library". Other titles - "The Yellow Seven", "Captain Robin Hood", "The Despot of the World", "The Scarlet Squadron", "Porson's X10 Plane", "Ghosts of the Guillotine", "Buckaroo, Outlaw", "Kaffir's Curse".

ROWE JOHN G. (Gabriel) - (born at Liverpool 1874). Another writer with an amazing output - so much so that he simply had to have a string of pen names. Some of them were Charles Lewis, Mortimer Austin, Capt. Arthur Ferris, Gregory Dunstan, Chas. A. Ransome and James Bright.

His first successful story was written when he was 16 - it was called "Cupid's Dart"! Then for years he was busy turning out yarns of all descriptions for Pearson's, Newnes, Shurey's, Aldine, Henderson's, Lang's and Harmsworth's. His first for the latter was "The Traitor Guide", 1/2d. "Marvel" No. 38 in 1894. Wrote many of the popular "Tufty and Co." school stories for Henderson's Nugget Library. When a child, through the carelessness of a nursemaid, he suffered from a fall which left him disfigured. Self-conscious about this he, in later life, grew a beard to hide the scars.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Library, No. 371. Frank Richards, Rose Lawn, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, Kent.

STUART DONALD Yet another of the Sexton Blake band of authors.

Wrote his first on scraps of paper when down and out. His most notable achievement was a stage play entitled "Sexton Blake" which was successfully produced at the Prince Edward Theatre in London in 1930, the Arthur Wontner playing the title role. This was later published as a story in the "Union Jack" under the title "Mr. Midnight". Stuart also contributed to "The Thriller". Some of the titles:- "Sinister House", "Sinister Quest", "The Three Who Paid", "The Bells of Doom", "The Third Victim", "The Motor Bus Mystery", "The Million Pound Film Mystery".

STORM DUNCAN Wrote many stories for the "Boys' Friend" weekly. Most popular set of characters were "The Boys of the Bombay Castle", a school ship which toured the world. These were rather of the slepstick variety, many later re-published in the "B.F. 4d. Library".

SYMONDS F. ADDINGTON - Best known as editor of "The Champion". Made it a tremendous success from the very start in 1922. Vacated the editorial chair after rather more than two years, and all the personality and the vim went with him.

In addition to his editorial activities somehow found time to write a lot of stories, using pen names - Earle Danesford and Howard Steele among others. Many of these yarns were of the "off the trail" type, to use his own expression, with titles like "Zara of the Earth Men" and "In Terror's Realm".

Was also one of the band of Sexton Blake authors. For these stories he created "The Raven" and "Claire de Lisle".

In his boyhood was a great admirer of Arthur Brooke. They corresponded and later became great friends. When eventually he became an editor himself he had the unique experience of welcoming to his staff the men who had so inspired him when a small boy.

TEED GEORGE HAMILTON Another who knew almost every land on the face of the globe, plainly appeared in his stories. Best known as a Sexton Blake author and many place him at the top of the list of a hundred or more writers who penned stories of the "man from Baker Street". Wrote more stories about him than anyone else with the possible exception of Murray Graydon. Created numerous opponents for Blake, including the glamorous Yvonne. With the latter developed a love interest with masterly skill. Also took over George Marsden Plummer when "Mark Osborne" died. Also wrote the first story in the Sexton Blake library - "The Yellow Tiger" - probably the finest story in Blake lore.

Died during the late war, leaving a gap which has never been filled.

WALKEY S. For some reason his name always appeared just like that, but it is believed that his Christian name was Samuel. He was best known for his exciting, blood-tingling pirate yarns which usually appeared in "Chums". Some of the titles were "Crossbones Island", "Yo Ho for the Spanish Main", "Tallifer Trueblade", "The Ten Pirates", "Under the Fiery Cross", "Jack O'Lantern". The stories were always illustrated vividly by Paul Hardy. Many of his yarns were re-published as bound books together with others that had not previously appeared as serials such as "With the Redskins on the War Path".

ST. JOHN HENRY (b. Nov. 3rd 1869, d. Nov. 1926) Add Cooper to get his real name. Pen names Lieut. Paul Lefevre, Gordon Holme, and quite often Mabel St. John. One of Hamilton Edwards' star turns and his chief school story writer. Had quaint ideas of public schools, however, for his appeared to be more like reformatories. Was at his best with adventure yarns, treasure island, the Navy in Nelson's day, circus, etc.

Thought nothing of having half a dozen serials in process on his desk at once. Would dash off an instalment of "The Fourth Form at St. Basil's" (his favourite school), then nonchalantly change to Mabel and prepare for the readers of the "Girls' Friend" more of the adventures of sweet Folly Green. He made contributions also to many of the adult magazines such as "The Merry" with humorous stories written under his full name. In his spare time was a breeder of bulldogs. A relative of the famous actress, Gladys Cooper.

SCOTT MAXWELL (born Nov. 14, 1863, died Jan. 3, 1927). Actually Dr. John William Staniforth, a doctor with an extensive practice on the Yorkshire Coast near Whitby. Whilst going his rounds, steadying the pulses of his patients, he was plotting to quicken those of the readers of his inimitable detective stories. Many a man now approaching pension age remembers him with gratitude and affection.

Created four detectives: "Nelson Lee" for the A.P. papers, "Kenyon Ford" and "Vernon Read" - "Big Budget" and "Boys' Leader", and "Martin Dale" for "Chums". His favourite theme - vast estates, villainous peers and missing heirs. Loved to take his detecti on a chase across the world. Worked with a Bradshaw and a Lloyds shipping list before him. If he told you that a train left Newcastle at 1.23 and arrived King's Cross 6.47 you could be sure that it was so. A good example of his painstaking methods is connected with "The Iron Skull" which appeared in "The Boys' Leader". It had a dramatic finale - a thrilling race from Leeds to Armley Gaol to save a life. Vernon Read arrived at the last second. Whilst writing it Maxwell Scott journeyed specially to Leeds and checked the run to Armley, watch in hand.

Paradoxically he had several pet cliches which he used again and again. Read an instalment of any of his detective serials and you would be almost certain to find "Quivering with excitement", "Like an arrow from a bow", "In the twinkling of an eye".

A few of his detective serials were "Birds of Prey", "The Silver Dwarf", (later re-published as a serial in the N.L.), "The Iron Hand" (also appeared serially in the Lee later), "The Great Unknown", "The Winged Terror", "Nelson Lee's Pupil" (introducing Nipper); all Nelson Lee yarns. "The Seven Stars", "Hidden Gold" (Kenyon Ford), "The Red Hand" and "The Iron Skull" (Vernon Read). Also wrote a number of sport and school serials but these not up to the standard of his detective stories. Maxwell Scott died soon after the first World War and was buried at Hinderwell, Yorkshire.

SHAW FRANK H. Contributed to many A.P. publications. A world traveller, ship's captain, he was Commander of a Balloon Section in World War I, later in the R.N.R. on "Q" Boat service. Adventure yarns were his speciality, many appearing in "Chums". Titles include "The Brand of Mystery", "His Crownship", "The Red Deluge", "The Mystery Ship of the Seven Seas", "The Fourth Finger of Li Chang Suey". Also wrote many adult short stories for such mags as "The Strand", "Red", "Cassell's", "Penny Pictorial" etc. Wrote also under pen name Grenville Hammerton.

WARREN BELL ROBERT STANLEY (born 1871, died 1921). The founder and first editor of "The Captain" magazine. Contributed many short stories and serials of public school life. Relinquished the editorship in 1910, with the 23rd volume, but still continued to write for the paper. Titles include "Smith's Week" describing the trials of a junior master's first term at a public school, "Black Evans", "The Mystery of Markham", "Playing the Game", "Green at Greyhouse", "Dormitory Eight", "Greyhouse Days", "The Three Prefects", "The Secret Seven", "J.O. Jones", "Jim Mortimer".

WODEHOUSE PELHAM GRENVILLE The famous humourist. In his early days contributed several public school stories to "The Captain", all in the inimitable style that became world renowned. An expert boxer, cricketer and footballer himself, the sporting incidents in his school yarns were superb. Titles - "The Pothunters" (his first), "The Manoeuvres of Charteris", "The White Feather", "Jackson Jr.", "Tales of Wrykin" (short stories), "Tales of St. Austin's" (s.s.), "Head of Kay's", "The Gold Bat", "A Prefect's Uncle", and the P. Smith stories - "The Lost Lambs", "The New Fold" etc. During this period of his career Wodehouse also contributed to "The Public School Magazine". All his stories were later re-published many times as bound books.

WRAY REGINAED (born 1861) Also wrote as Reginald Drew and W.B. Home Gall, the latter probably his real name. In his early days saw life all over the world and turned his hand to all sorts of jobs including that of a lumberjack. Could handle a pen as deftly as he could an axe and probably found the lighter weapon more remunerative. Some of his earlier work appeared in the "Boys' Friend", serials included "Britisher and Yankee", "The Three R's", "Tremaine of Uppingdene" and "When Britons Face the Fee". Also wrote "The Red Roger" for the "Big Budget". When the "Boys' Realm" started it included his "Quest of the Scarlet Star". Could write a good quick action yarn, but had a rather exaggerated, melodramatic style, in "death or glory" fashion. This was evident in such stories as "A World at Stake" and "A Fight for Empire" in the "Boys' Realm". When these stories were re-printed in the "Gem" the author was given as W.B. Home Gall. Also wrote numerous school stories full of slapstick humour.

FRIENDLY RIVALS:

For several weeks in 1901 the famous "Chips" pair, Weary Willie and Tired Tim, appeared on the front page of the "Big Budget" along with that paper's comic couple "Airy Alf, and, Bouncing Billy".



Mr. Prout.

Dwellers in the Greyfriars Remove

By Wm. H. Gander

Readers who first became acquainted with Greyfriars during the latter two-thirds of the "Magnet Library's" run might be excused if they thought that the status quo of the Remove Form had been maintained unchanged right from the beginning. After the arrival of Richard Hilary in "Magnet" No. 559 not one character was permanently added to the Remove's roll, although several came, played their part, and then went away.

But the Remove were not assembled in the space of a few weeks--- as we knew it, that it, in the later years -- though doubtless it had a full quota in February, 1908. It took Frank Richards five hundred and fifty-nine weeks to gather together thirty-eight of the thirty-nine characters who are listed in "Magnet" No. 1659 -- one of the thirty-nine is not his. In those 559 weeks there had appeared on the Remove scene at least 80 Removites. Some of them left the school, voluntarily or otherwise, some just faded away like the old soldiers. A goodly number, most of whom may justly be ignored, were creations of writers other than Frank Richards.

Two of them who deserve a little attention are Archie Howell, brother of Phyllis Howell of Cliff House School, who bobbed into and out of the stories for quite a long time, and Piet Delarey. Piet's case is rather peculiar. Created by J. N. Pentelow (as was Archie Howell also), he was missing from the stories after "Magnet" No. 952, but continued to appear both in the "Greyfriars Herald" supplement and in the Remove list that was printed occasionally. Archie Howell must have puzzled readers. When he was mentioned, he was a study-mate of Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, but he was never brought into yarns by Frank Richards.

How did the permanent members of the Remove arrive, and in what order? Let us skim lightly through our "Magnets" and see.

Although Harry Wharton came into the first Greyfriars story, very strongly in fact, the title being "The Making of Harry Wharton," he does not claim to have been in the Remove longer than anyone else. Already at the school in "Magnet" No. 1 were six juniors who were still there in the last issue. They were Frank Nugent, George Bulstrode (at that time the bully of the Form), Billy Bunter (somehow a different Bunter from the one we came to know so well later), Dick Russell, Harold Skinner, and Peter Hazeldene.

That first story of Harry Wharton's schooldays is probably very well known to Greyfriars fans, for though "Magnet" No. 1 may be very scarce, the story has been reprinted several times. So there is little need to say much about Harry's conflict with his uncle, Colonel Wharton, his going to Greyfriars, his troubles there, and his eventual climb to leadership of the Remove. Harry made a bad start with Frank Nugent, quarreling with him, and they came to blows. But they became

reconciled after Wharton saved him from a watery grave in the river Sark, and if there have been differences between them since, they did not last.

Herbert Trevor made his appearance in "Magnet" No. 2, never played a large part in the stories, and was on the scene to the end of the paper's run. "In direct contrast is Bob Cherry, who also arrived in No. 2. His cheery "Hello, hello, hello!" became well known in the Remove passage and in the pages of "The Magnet", though I fail to see it in "The Taming of Harry". Wharton was not yet tamed when Bob met him, and the inevitable result was that a fight between them was forced upon Bob. Harry was soundly licked, for Bob was a great fighting man from the first. Later, Harry would have given a better account of himself. They soon made up their differences and Bob became the third member of what was to be known as the Famous Four -- later the Famous Five.

The next junior to arrive and stay became the fourth member of that group -- Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. His first stay at Greyfriars was temporary and was recorded in "Magnet" No. 6, he being intended for Herr Rosenbaum's Academy, which was opened near Greyfriars. But "Inky", as he is affectionately called, managed to come back to Greyfriars permanently.

"Magnet" No. 8 saw David Morgan, of Wales, come into the stories, and he, too, stayed on, seldom being in the limelight. Next come Micky Desmond, from Ireland, in No. 15, who is also one of the lesser characters, though both he and Morgan are real good fellows. Micky was followed by a boy who did not remain at Greyfriars, but who rates mention here all the same. He was Ernest Levison, who arrived in No. 18 and pursued an unseavury career until No. 46, when he was either expelled or, what amounts to the same thing, requested to leave. Later he went to St. Jim's where, after following a similar shady career, he got his feet on the right path in a well-remembered series of stories that appeared in "The Gem" during World War I.

Not until "Magnet" No. 32 did another permanent player appear on the Greyfriars stage. He was Robert Smith, generally known in the stories as Smith Minor because he has an older brother in the Fifth Form. Smith Minor is minor not only in his years but also in the role he has played in the Form. Three weeks later there appeared one who has at times played more important parts than Smith Minor ever did, but is a rather detestable character, due largely to his being so much under the influence of Harold Skinner. He is William Stott, and he arrived in "Magnet" No. 35.

Wun Lung, the little Chinese junior who has appeared in many stories, came along in "Magnet" No. 36, with his prevarications, conjuring, pies with very mysterious fillings, and "No savvy". He was fortunate to find himself in Bob Cherry's study, the burly Bob seeing to it that Wun was not unduly imposed upon.

It will be seen that Removites destined to stay long at Greyfriars were coming into the stories with some regularity, and seven weeks after the advent of Wun Lung there came on the scene Donald Robert Ogilvy.

in "Magnet" No. 43. As was the case with some of the other early members of the Remove, Ogilvy came in without any fanfare, although he did play important parts in some later stories. No. 43 was the first "Magnet" Christmas Number, but unlike so many Christmas Number stories in the years to come, the action of this story took place at Greyfriars.

No. 45 saw the arrival of one who played a leading part in the yarns that tell of his struggles against heavy odds to establish himself at Greyfriars -- Mark Linley, from Lancashire. Entering the school on a scholarship, Mark promptly encountered the bitter antagonism of the worst fellows in the Form, abetted by some who should have known better. In "A Lad From Lancashire" we learn of his arrival and of his being met at Friardale station by a small group of Removeites, headed by Bulstrode. Their attempts to "bait" the new boy were not altogether successful, Linley being fully capable of looking after himself. But the cool reception he got at the school made him feel uncomfortable, to say the least, and for a time it was touch-and-go whether he would give up the attempt to make a place for himself. He did not, however, and in time became one of the most popular fellows in the Remove, good at games, but too much given to study to take a large part in out-of-Form activities.

Sidney James Snoop also made his first appearance in No. 45, but without any fanfare, which in his case was just as well, for he became one of that unseavoursy trio, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott.

New boys who stayed were coming along less often now, and it was five months before another appeared. But he was worth waiting for, he being Tom Brown from New Zealand, whose arrival is recorded in "Magnet" No. 86, "The Chum From New Zealand". Tom came out of Friardale station right into a Form row, Remove vs. Upper Fourth, and was not slow to join in. Arriving at the school, he was so unfortunate as to "floor" Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, with a well-placed kick of a football into the school door, but, being a new boy, got off with a "wiggling". Tom Brown stayed on at Greyfriars, quickly becoming one of the Remove stalwarts, and was heard of down through the years.

Anthony Treluce is first noticed in No. 116, and apart from recording that he is Cornish, there is little to say of him, for he came into the stories quietly and has done little to attract attention since.

But if Treluce caused no stir, the same cannot be said of the next Removeite to arrive at Greyfriars. He was Herbert Vernon-Smith, who came in No. 119, and if Frank Richards had not added a notable name to the Remove list for some months he made up for it now. Smithy's full name was given as Herbert Tudor Vernon-Smith, but such a nifty name did not prevent him from quickly becoming known as "The Bounder", a term which stuck to him even after he no longer deserved it. "The Bounder of Greyfriars" introduced us to the arrogant, weedy, unscrupulous only son of a purse-proud father who did not hesitate to force Dr. Locke to allow Smithy to stay at the school when he richly deserved expulsion. Smithy gradually learned better ways, the first improvement being his becoming athletic, though it was probably because doing so would enable him the better to further his bitter antagonism to Harry Wharton and his

friends. He carried this antagonism to the point of getting most of the Famous Five sent from Greyfriars, only to be foiled by Bob Cherry, who refused to leave. In time Smithy mended his ways until he became almost a model character, only to do some back-sliding in later years. In spite of this, he was probably one of the most popular of the Removites with "Magnet" readers.

Next to arrive on the Greyfriars scene was the simple-minded Alonzo Todd (No. 125), "The Duffer of Greyfriars". Alonzo was born to have his leg pulled, and pulled it was, unmercifully. Alonzo was featured a lot for a time, but I have a feeling that he did not go over too well with readers -- I may be wrong -- for later he vanished from Greyfriars and we were informed that his health was not robust enough for school life. He was met with occasionally, however, away from Greyfriars, and was found in Remove lists to the end.

Alonzo was soon followed, in "Magnet" No. 128, by Tom Dutton, who, afflicted with deafness that seemed to be even more of an affliction to his schoolfellows than it was to himself, is a good chap, but has not taken a great part in the stories.

The arrival of no more permanent Removites was recorded until No. 150, when Fisher T. Fish, from New York, breezed on to the scene with his many schemes to get rich quickly at the expense of someone else. I rather wish he had stayed in little ole New York, for the good of both Greyfriars and "The Magnet", and will pass on to the next newcomer, noting meanwhile the reply of the Editor of the paper to "A Loyal Canadian Reader" (who probably felt as I do) in "Magnet" No. 407: "Fisher T. Fish is never intended to represent a typical American, so keep cool." I will.

Johnny Bull, the fifth member of the Famous Five, arrived at Greyfriars right on the heels of Fishy, being first met in "Magnet" No. 151. John Bull Junior, as he was then known, was about as different from Fishy as he could be, a blunt, outspoken individual, as honest as the day. But he was doomed to share Study No. 14 with Fishy, and many a time did he put a temporary end to the latter's peculiar financial activities. Johnny's arrival was related in the story, "The Girls' School Challenge", in which Marjorie Hazeldene & Co., of Cliff House School, played an important part. He entered the school during class hours, and the first intimation the juniors had of his presence was an unearthly wailing floating through the corridors and down the stairs, giving them the impression that someone was in mortal agony. It turned out to be just Johnny Bull playing his concertina. He never did learn to make sweet music on it, and must have ceased trying, for after a time no more was heard of the concertina. It was Johnny who first got the idea of a junior weekly magazine, which he called "John Bull Junior's Weekly". Fishy started "The Greyfriars Herald" later, only to have it taken over by Harry Wharton & Co. The next week's story told more about Johnny, it being entitled "John Bull Junior".

No juniors came into the Remove to stay for several months, the next being Percy Bolsover (Magnet No. 182, "The Cock of the Walk"), of whom little need be said except that he more than filled the spot left

vacant as Form bully by George Bulstrode. A hulking brute of a fellow, he "licked" the Remove's champion fighting men for the time being, and it was necessary to call in the help of Solly Lazarus, of Courtfield, to put him in his place.

Two weeks later Lord Mauleverer came to Greyfriars in "The Schoolboy Millionaire", in "Magnet" No. 184. Though featured in that story, Mauly settled down to a rather uneventful career, but we do remember him as leader of a "barring-cut" years later. He was too unenergetic to exert himself to the necessary extent to come to the front in Form affairs.

"The Magnet" had now been published for three years, twenty-seven of the permanent members of the Remove had come into the stories, and there were twelve yet to come. The next was Dick Penfold, son of the Priardale cobbler, who won a scholarship. He arrived at Greyfriars in "Magnet" No. 194, and immediately was the object of persecution perhaps more bitter than that directed earlier against Mark Linley. But he, too, was made of the "right stuff" and triumphed over all obstacles.

The case of Peter Todd, the cousin of the guileless Alonzo who looks like Alonzo and is so different, has me puzzled. Should he be mentioned here because of his first coming to Greyfriars ("Magnet" No. 205), or later in the spot he occupied due to his arrival as a Removite? In "The Duffer's Double" Alonzo met his cousin away from Greyfriars and was persuaded by Peter to let him go to the school as if he were Alonzo. The latter agreed, and the Removites had a great surprise, for Peter was a doughty fighting man -- doughtier, in fact, than he seemed to be later -- and defeated all-comers, including the burly Bolsover. The masquerade was carried on only to the end of that story - in contrast to Billy and Wally Bunter, who, years later, carried on their switching of identities for weeks -- and Peter went away, not to return as a member of the Remove until "Magnet" No. 271, more than a year later.

Eleven weeks passed by and then Monty Newland became a member of the Remove (No. 216). Monty Newland is Jewish, and he immediately came up against anti-Semitism. Being a boy of strong character, he faced up to it bravely, but his future at the old school looked black indeed when it became known that Dr. Locke, the Headmaster, was involved financially with a Jewish money-lender, Moses Levinski. The latter, who was acquainted with Newland, created a scene at Greyfriars when he called to demand of the Head repayment of a loan that had actually been repaid with interest amounting to fifty per cent. The wrath of the juniors when they learned of this was turned against Newland, who had a rough time until it became public knowledge that he had used his influence with Levinski to force him to return to Dr. Locke all the papers regarding the debt. From then on Monty was well established with all the fellows who mattered. He is a good chap, a good athlete, and well able to stand up for himself.

New arrivals in the Remove were now few and far between and it was the better part of a year before Richard Rake became known to the Removites ("Magnet" No. 258). He was honoured with a story in which

A Happy Christmas to you all

he played a leading part, and he proved to be handy with his fists. Later he seldom came to the fore.

Ten weeks later another new Removite was introduced to "Magnet" readers, and once again he was one who did not often play a leading role -- though he did play one more often, I think, than did Dick Rake. He was Oliver Kipps, who brought with him a marvellous ability to perform conjuring and sleight-of-hand tricks. Kipps had a good innings, anyway, in the story which introduced him; "The Schoolboy Conjuror", "Magnet" No. 268 -- one of his stunts being the playing of football on his hands instead of in the usual manner.

It was just over a year before "Magnet" No. 322 brought with it, in "Wibley's Wheeze", William Ernest Wibley, the schoolboy actor. When he entered the school for the first time, he heard proceeding from the "Rag" the voices of two juniors, one threatening to kill the other. Thoroughly alarmed, he rushed to the rescue, but found the door locked. So he went outside, climbed through an open window, and rescued Frank Nugent from death at the hands of Harry Wharton, giving the latter a severe bump on the chin in the process. Wibley was quite embarrassed to find that, far from effecting a thrilling rescue, he had only interrupted the Junior Dramatic Society in a rehearsal of "The Red Rover". Wibley is a very self-satisfied youth, so he apologised and, explaining that he is a bit of an actor himself, offered to take a part in the play. By way of thanks he was returned to the outdoors, quite suddenly, by way of the window through which he had entered the Rag. But Wibley wasn't one to blush, like the violet, unseen, and it wasn't long before he, and not Harry Wharton, was the leader of the Dramatic Society. During his stay at Greyfriars Wibley has pulled off some very daring impersonations, the latest being that recorded during the last few months of "The Magnet".

We are now getting near the end of the list, and among the six whose arrivals are still to be recorded one stands out more in Remove affairs, perhaps, than any of the others. He is Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, whose arrival was told of in "Magnet" No. 343, "A Cool Card". The date of this issue is September 5th, 1914, which indicates that we have now come to the beginning of World War I. No. 343 is one of the few "Magnets" that I do not have, so I cannot tell of Field's arrival at Greyfriars. He immediately became known as "Squiff", life being too short, said Bob Cherry, to say "Sampson Quincy Iffley Field", and his forceful character quickly carried him to the forefront of Remove affairs. For a time, when Johnny Bull sailed away to Australia, it looked as if Squiff would take his place in the "Co.", but Johnny came back. Squiff, by the way, came from Australia to Greyfriars.

Almost two years passel, and then, in "Magnet" No. 432, "The Boy From South Africa", we met Piet Delarey. J. N. Pentelow, creator of Piet Delarey and writer of this story, told a tale of a boy coming from South Africa to Greyfriars in war-time, and meeting scorn and reproach on the grounds that he was the son of a rebel. The truth of the matter eventually came out and at the end of the story Squiff says: "Delarey's father is no more a rebel than mine, or Bob Cherry's . . . He was out

with Botha to hunt down the rebels ... and now he's in East Africa, fighting still! I seem to remember that J.N.P. had Delarey pal up with Squiff and Tom Brown to form a Colonial Co. in later Greyfriars stories that he wrote, but, as already mentioned, Piet Delarey vanished from the stories after "Magnet" No. 952.

A few more months passed before Sir Jimmy Vivian, Baronet, was literally snatched from the gutter and sent to Greyfriars. This happens in No. 471, "Sir Jimmy of Greyfriars". Once he was established at the school he stopped being of much importance in the stories, but at first he did not fare too well, due to his rather crude ways and talk, which smacked of Carker's Rents. With the help of the better fellows, including "Mauly", who is his somewhat distant relative, Jimmy came through the ordeal successfully and has remained in the Remove since, sharing Mauly's study.

"In Another's Place", in "Magnet" No. 517, brought us Tom Redwing, son of a sailorman who lived at Hawkscliffe, a small village some miles along the coast from Greyfriars. Tom saved the life of Vernon-Smith when the latter's boat went drifting to sea. Then he met a fellow going to Greyfriars, Clavering, who would rather go into the Army, being large for his years. Redwing was persuaded to take Clavering's place, and went to the school as him, little thinking that the fellow whose life he had saved was a Greyfriars fellow. What happened made a fine series of stories, and the time came when Redwing was able, after leaving Greyfriars, to come back in his own name, where he has since been Smith's closest pal.

Now we have come to the last two to be placed on the Remove roll for keeps, Napoleon Dupont, who is introduced in "Napoleon of Greyfriars", "Magnet" No. 540, and Richard Hilary, whose arrival is told of in "Magnet" No. 559, "A Case of Conscience". Neither of them played important parts subsequently. Nap fell foul of Bolsover, but later became as much a pal of the bully's as he ever had. Hilary's early days at the school were troubled by his having a conscientious objector for a father, which was not calculated, in October, 1918, to make him popular with his schoolfellows. But his father turned up, following a change of heart, in the King's uniform, and Hilary's path became smoother.

Thus we come to the end of the Remove list of thirty-nine boys as given in "Magnet" No. 1659, which has been used in preference to that in "Magnet" No. 395, the latter showing forty-four fellows.

GIRLS' BOOKS WANTED: School Friend, Schoolgirl, Schoolgirls' Own, Schoolgirls' Own Weekly (up to 1939) also Schoolgirls' Own Library, particularly by Hilda Richards, Marjorie Stanton, Joy Phillips, in old series of S.O.L. Also No.2 S.O.L. (new series - post-war) "Miss Nameless of the Holiday Camp" by Gail Western.

Gordon Kirby, 55, Forest Street, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.

Reprinted Stories in the "Sexton Blake Library"

By William Colcombe

Below is a list of the reprinted stories that have appeared in "The Sexton Blake Library" (2nd series). It is complete as far as I know, but it is just possible that one or two others may be reprints, for instance, No. 608 "The Bailiff's Secret" may be a reprint of No. 175 "The Man from Rio" and No. 656 "The Fatal Fortune" is most probably a reprint of one of the earlier works of Andrew Murray, for until this story appeared he had not written a Blake yarn since the 1920's.

All of Pierre Quiroule's later stories were reprints, mostly of his early Library tales, but No's 540, 569, 607, 621, 630, 658, 684 and 691 are based on some of his work in "The Union Jack" and it may be that No. 491 is also in this same category. I am sure that No. 462, 420 and 423 are reprinted 1st series stories, but I am unable to trace the originals.

For the sake of completeness it should be noted that No. 4 (third series) is a reprint of No. 356 (2nd series) "The Red Stiletto".

Ser. No.	Original Title	Reprinted 2nd Series Title and Number
1 163	The Secret of the Frozen North.	416 Dead Man's Diary. 420 The Secret of the Woods. 423 The Missing Spy.
1 258	The Riders Of The Sands.	426 The Riders Of The Sands.
1 151	The Mystery Box.	432 The Mystery Box.
1 204	The Secret of the Red Mountain.	436 The Red Mountain.
1 221	The Phantom Of The Pacific.	440 The Phantom Of The Pacific.
1 193	The Sacred City.	443 The Sacred City.
1 243	The Crimson Domino.	448 The Red Domino.
1 141	The Mystery of the Living Shadow.	451 The Living Shadow.
1 287	The Outlaw Of Jugo Slavia.	455 The Outlaw Of Jugo Slavia.
1 300	The Case Of The 5 Dummy Books.	458 The Case of the 5 Dummy Books. 462 The Slavers Secret. 463 The Crimson Belt.
1 307	The Crimson Belt.	
1 330	The Vanished Million.	467 The Vanished Million.
1 352	The Forest Of Fortune.	471 The Forest Of Fortune.
1 318	The Secret Of The Black Wallet.	475 The Man With The Black Wallet.
1 217	The Case of the Rajah's Son.	479 The Mystery Of The Rajah's Son.
1 339	The Case Of The Kidnapped Legatee	483 The Secret Of The Gold Locket.
1 317	The Shrine Of Kali.	488 The Curse Of Kali. 491 The Secret Of The Armament King.
1 374	The Riddle Of The Lost Battleship.	504 The Havana Mystery.
2 5	The Mystery Of The Platinum Nugget.	508 The Soho Cafe Crime.
2 18	The Adventure of the Albanian Avenger.	512 The Mystery Of The Albanian Avenger.
1 254	The Sign In The Sky.	520 The Secret Of The Tong.
1 303	The Lost Expedition.	523 The Lost Expedition.

Ser.No.	Original Title.	Reprinted 2nd Series Title & Number
2 45	The Ethiopian's Secret.	532 The Ethiopian's Secret.
2 41	The Island Of The Guilty.	536 The Island Of The Guilty.
2 30	The Case Of The Long Firm Frauds.	553 The Case Of The Long Firm Frauds.
2 36	The Case Of The Blackmailed Baronet.	563 The Case Of The Blackmailed Baronet.
2 9	The Case Of The Man Who Never Slept.	568 The Case Of The Man Who Never Slept.
2 26	The Barton Menor Mystery.	576 The Curse Of The Santyres.
2 13	The Mystery Of The Swanley Viaduct.	582 The Mystery Of The Swanley Viaduct.
1 169	The Secret Of The Six Black Dots.	589 The Mystery Of The Missing Aviator.
2 19	The Great Canal Plot.	590 The Great Canal Plot.
2 76	The Crook Of Fleet Street.	604 The Crook Of Fleet Street.
2 77	The Terror Of Tangier.	615 The Terror Of Tangier.
2 65	The Excavator's Secret.	620 The Excavator's Secret.
2 115	The Prisoners Of Peru.	623 The Prisoners Of Peru.
2 89	The Tiger Of Canton.	628 The Tiger Of Canton.
2 103	The Fatal Pit.	631 The Fatal Pit.
2 121	The Case Of The Poisoned Pen.	635 The Case Of The Poisoned Pen.
2 113	The Case Of The Disguised Apache.	640 The Case Of The Disguised Apache.
2 119	The Mystery Of The Film City.	644 The Mystery Of The Film City.
2 123	The Giant City Swindle.	646 The Giant City Swindle.
2 124	The Secret Of The Snows.	651 The Secret Of The Snows.
2 108	The Phantom Of The Mill.	659 The Phantom Of The Mill.
2 82	The Night Club Mystery.	663 The Night Club Mystery.
2 102	The Riddle Of The Amber Room.	667 The Sign Of The Black Feather.
2 131	The Riddle Of The West End Hairdresser.	672 The Riddle of the West End Hairdresser.
1 102	The Case Of The Burmese Dagger	675 The Burmese Dagger.
2 116	The Great Trunk Mystery.	676 The Great Trunk Mystery.
2 112	The Tour Of Terror.	680 The Tour Of Terror.
2 33	The Impersonators.	683 The Impersonators.
2 144	The Case Of The Bogus Monk.	687 The Case Of The Bogus Monk.
2 145	The Case of the Rejuvenated Millionaire.	692 The Case Of The Rejuvenated Millionaire.
2 147	The Rubber Smugglers.	693 The Rubber Smugglers.
2 151	The Fur Raiders.	700 The Fur Raiders.
2 155	The Case Of The Shot P.C.	703 The Case Of The Shot P.C.
1 86	The Red Heart Of The Incas.	704 The Case Of The Sacred Ruby.
2 158	The Terror Of Gold Digger Creek.	707 The Terror Of Gold Digger Creek.
1 63	The Secret Of The Hulk.	708 The Secret Of The Hulk.
1 28	Sexton Blake - Special Constable.	711 Sexton Blake - Special Constable.
2 152	The Mystery Of Sherwood Towers.	714 The Mystery Of Sherwood Towers.
2 165	The Adventure Of The 8th Millionaire.	718 The Adventure Of The 8th Millionaire.
2 171	The Case Of The Crimson Conjuror.	723 The Case of The Crimson Conjuror.
2 327	The Consulting Room Crime	726 The Consulting Room Mystery.
2 164	The Case Of The Jack Of Clubs.	728 The Case Of The Jack of Clubs.
		732 Twenty Years Of Hate.
2 358	Dead Man's Bay.	734 The Riddle Of Dead Man's Bay.
2 344	The Ghost Trail.	738 The Riddle Of The Yukon.
2 335	Doomed Men.	740 Doomed Men.
1 374	In The Night Watch.	744 In The Night Watch.

Heigh-Ho the Holly

By Eric Payne

The most popular issue of any periodical in any year, - the Xmas Number! These Christmas Numbers had something! Lashings of holly, mistletoe, and snow, - always it was a "white Christmas", - the hips and haws bobbed on the hedges, the ice was thick on the lake, there were turkeys and plum puddings, and almost always, a festive ghost roamed around as the wind wailed through the old elms.

Until 1917 there was a special Double Number every Christmas, often with a bright and seasonable coloured cover. I wonder why the Double Number died with the first world war. Maybe because the normal weekly prices of the papers had risen, and the publishers felt that "double size, double price" might come too much of a burden, even for one week only. But, the bookstalls were definitely the poorer for the passing of the Double Number.

I propose to glance over the Christmas Numbers of the Gem and the Magnet. It is impossible, of course, to cover them all, but it is interesting to recall the most outstanding.

The first Gem Christmas Number, a double one, price One Penny for this week only, Usual size and price next week, contained "Tom Merry's Christmas". It was dated 23rd November 1907. For years the Gem Christmas number appeared in November, and the Magnet's similar issue about three weeks later. It is probably for this reason that many of the Gem Christmas Number stories were located at the School.

But "Tom Merry's Christmas" had a real yuletide setting. It had no plot, but was just a jolly feast of Christmas cheer. The story occupied 23 pages, but had only two illustrations, which gives an idea of the length of those early tales.

Incidentally, this Christmas was spent at Tom's home at Laurel Villa. Curiously enough, the last Christmas story in the Gem was also centred at Laurel Villa in 1939. So Tom Merry spent his first and his last Christmas at Huckleberry Heath. I wonder whether Martin Clifford realised this!

November 21st 1908 brought a 60-page issue, illustrated profusely by Warwick Reynolds. The story had the hackneyed title "The Ghost of St. Jim's, - though it was not hackneyed at that time. It was Binks, the page, who played the ghost.

The Magnet was now going strong, and on December 5th 1908 there came the first Double Number of the Magnet, containing "The Greyfriars Victory".

Have you joined the Old Boys' Book Club

Dated November 20th 1909 was Gem Xmas Number containing "The Terrible Three's Christmas Party". It was one of a series of stories in which Tom Merry visited France. This story was reprinted in the S.O.L. in the nineteen-thirties, and, probably due to this fact, its appearance as a reprint in the Gem was considerably belated. It actually was the story in the 1937 Christmas Number, which, incidentally, was the last Gem with the Red and Blue cover. The 1909 Christmas Number was the first Gem Double Number illustrated by Macdonald.

November 19th 1910 was the date of the Christmas Number for that year, but the story "Levison, the Schoolboy Detective" had no Christmas flavour. It had evidently been written for a normal sized Gem, for the issue was completed with two other adventure stories and two serials.

The Magnet that year gave "Bunter's Bust-Up", and this issue also contained three other stories and a serial.

November 18th 1911 brought yet another "Ghost of St. Jim's", and this time the ghost was Mr. Selby's relative. This story was reprinted at least three times in the Popular, and it appeared again in the Gem. Three weeks later the Magnet presented "Wingate's Folly", in which the Captain of Greyfriars fell in love. The issue also contained a St. Jim's story "The Stars of the Circus", introducing Tomsonio's Circus, of which Mr. Hamilton had written under his pen-name of Harry Dorrian.

Dated November 23rd 1912, the Gem Double Number presented a very fine and unusual mystery story "Nobody's Study". Though this story was often asked for, I believe it was only reprinted once. The 1912 Christmas Number also contained "The Grammar School's Triumph", introducing St. Jim's and Kylcombe Grammar School. This tale was reprinted from the old Empire Library, under the authorship of Prosper Howard. Many have suggested that the latter was yet another name for C.H., but Mr. Hamilton does not claim the authorship of the Grammar School tales.

1913 is memorable because this year the Double Numbers first had special coloured covers. The Gem, dated November 22nd 1913, contained a famous story "The Mystery of the Painted Room", - the first of many Christmases which the chums spent at Eastwood House. (When the story was reprinted in the Gem some 20 years later, a "sub" writer put in one or two extra chapters in order that the story might be extended over two issues.) That 1913 Double Number of the Gem also contained "The Showman's Double", one of C.H.'s Harry Dorrian stories of the circus, reprinted from Pluck.

The Magnet, dated December 13th 1913, gave "The Four Heroes". By November 1914, the war was on, but the publishers had not yet felt the paper pinch, and the Double Number was as large as ever. The Talbot era had started, and Martin Clifford naturally turned out "Talbot's Christmas".

The same year, a few weeks later, the Magnet presented "Drummed Out of Greyfriars", one of the "Feud with the Bounder" stories. This deservedly famous story seemed a sombre choice for Christmas.

November 1915 brought "A Stolen Holiday", complete with coloured cover. In this 48-page issue, the St. Jim's chums visited an uncle of D'Arcy. That year, dated December 11th, the Magnet gave the much criticised "Harry Wharton & Co's Pantomime", and this issue contained the words and music of a song "Rally Round". Part-composer of this song was Samways, who wrote many "sub" stories in the Magnet in his time.

The war was dragging on, but November 18th 1916 saw yet another Gem Christmas Double Number. The story was "In the Seats of the Mighty" by a "sub" writer, and it was illustrated by Warwick Reynolds, so the readers of that day perhaps did not find it too satisfying.

Then in 1917 came the last of the Double Numbers. The Gem had 32 pages and a coloured cover by Reynolds, - the latter a hideous affair. The tale "The Shadow of the Past" re-introduced Valentine Outram. That issue also contained a St. Jim's "Who's Who".

The Magnet, soon afterwards, gave "The Greyfriars Christmas Party", a sorry affair written by J.N.Pentelow, the editor at that time. The issue also contained a Greyfriars "Who's Who" as well as various short stories.

So ended, for ever, the era of Christmas Double Numbers. Later Christmas Numbers have probably had equal charms. Many of the Gem Christmas Numbers after 1918 carried "sub" stories, until all the above mentioned early stories were republished in their turn. Can you remember the Christmas issue which carried "A Christmas Barring Out", when the St. Jim's fellows refused to go home because Tom Merry had been expelled? Or another Christmas at Eastwood House, when he had a feud with Cardew?

In the Magnet, do you remember "Harry Wharton's Christmas", spent with the Bounder at Monte Carlo because Harry had quarrelled with his chums? Harry then quarrelled with the Bounder, and went to Jimmy Silver at the Priory to make the "Boys' Friend" Christmas Number of that year.

Do you remember the Christmas at Maulever Towers when the Red Earl walked? Do you remember spending one Christmas at Combermere Lodge and another at Reynham Towers? Do you recall when Bunter reformed after reading Dickens' "Christmas Carol"? Do you remember one less attractive Christmas on the high seas with Compton of the Fifth? And another Christmas at Hilton Hall? Not to mention a Christmas at Coker Lodge, when the Co. rescued the captive Horace? Do you recall a Christmas when Loder and Wingate fought in the snow? And what about Bunter hiding himself in the attic at Wharton Lodge and spending Christmas there unbeknown to anybody? Do you remember that Christmas at Wharton Lodge when the Head and Barnes, the Courtfield cracksman, paid a visit? Do you recall the Christmas when Wharton very nearly spent Christmas with Trumper, sailing round the coast? And that last sad Christmas when Mr. Quelch had been kidnapped?

Yes, those Christmas Numbers and those Christmas stories were unforgettable. Milestones of memory!

How many ghosts were "laid" by Harry Wharton and Tom Merry it would be difficult to say. Or how many secret passages they discovered.

But a Christmas Number without snow and a ghost would have been like a Christmas day without a pudding. As the Bard might have said, "Heigh-ho the Holly, those Tales were most jolly!"

Collectors Who's Who

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

The most popular feature in our first "Annual" would appear to have been the "Collectors' Who's Who". Time and time again during the year we have heard how useful it has been in helping collectors of like tastes in getting to know each other. It was, of course, essential we should bring it up to date and repeat it again this year. But here we were up against a difficulty. During the year many new members have entered the ranks, so that if we again gave details of all collections we should find this feature occupying about one third of the pages. Popular as it is this would be rather too much. So we decided to give details of collections only where new friends are concerned. There were however four who should have been in last year, but who were by some strange oversight omitted. The four were Miss E. B. Flinders and Messrs. Tom Satchell, Frank Keeling and Wilfred Darwin. To these we offered our sincere apologies as soon as we became aware of the oversight, and promised to give particulars of their collections also in this year's edition.

Where other old supporters are concerned, we got over the difficulty by dividing the numerous papers into groups, and then indicating which group or groups each collector is interested in. Thus Leeites can see at a glance where their comrades are, or their friendly rivals the Hamiltonians, for that matter. Also those who read the "Boys' Friend" when they went to school round about 1902, and contend that those were the days, will soon be able to find someone who thinks the same.

Here are the Groups:-

1. Victorian Papers.
2. Early 20th Century.
3. Aldines.
4. Captain, Boys' Own Paper, Chums and similar papers.
5. Hamilton Papers.
 - (a) Magnet,
 - (b) Gem,
 - (c) Penny Popular,
 - (d) Schoolboys' Own Library,
 - (e) Holiday Annuals.
6. Sexton Blake.
 - (a) Union Jack,
 - (b) Sexton Blake Libraries,
 - (c) Detective Weekly.
7. Nelson Lee and Monster Libraries.
8. Between Two Wars.
(Champion, Thriller, Boys' Realm (new series), Ranger, Modern Boy, etc. etc.)

A few subscribers, despite our appeals, did not return their Questionnaires. In their cases we have indicated their preferences to the best of our knowledge and belief.

ALLEN, Leonard M., 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield, 7.
Age 42. Groups 2, 4, 5(a), 6, 7, 8.

Specially Wanted: Captain Vols 20, 21, 22, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40. Chums, Vols: Years 1912 to 1919, 1921, 1927 to 1930. Nelson Lees, 455 to 463 and few odd numbers. Boys' Friend Library, "In Trackless Space" by R. W. Comrade. Comic papers period 1914 to 1924. Bullseyes and Startlers.

ARMITAGE, Tom, 205 Batley Road, Alverthorpe, Wakefield, Yorks.
Age 44. Groups 2, 5, 6, 7.

Information and titles always welcome of papers indicated above. Especially interested in everything published in 1920, also most of the comics and Boys' Friend between 1915-20.

BAGULEY, Joseph, "Moorings", Middle Hill, Pensilva, Cornwall.
Age 35. Groups 5, 7, 8.

BAWDEN, William L. 7 Penryn Street, Redruth, Cornwall.
Group 5.

BARNETT, Leonard. 2, New Street, Pittshill, Stoke-on-Trent.
Age 30. Group 5 (a) (d).

Wishes to exchange Magnets and S.O.L's (Greyfriars only).

BARTLETT, Henry J.H. Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.
Groups 2, 3, 5 (a) (d) (e).

Collects mainly complete story books. Requires early S.O.L's (Greyfriars), Boys' Friend 3d and 4d (Adventure, Fantasy); Ferrers Lord stories; Aldines and Hendersons; Sweeney Todd. Some hundreds for exchange.

BENNETT, R.V.; 64 Dudley Road, Tipton, Staffs.
Groups 5, 6, 7.

BOND, Herbert Maurice, 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.
Age 36. Group 6.

BOTTOMLEY, Fred. 48 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London, N.17.
Group 5.

BRETHERTON, T.P. Heskin, Nr. Chorley, Lancs.
Group 2.

BRYAN, S.F. 6 City Road, Peterborough, Northants.
Group 5.

BAXENDALE, Vincent Anthony. 1 Vincent Street, Openshaw, Manchester 11.
Age 29. Groups - All.

Specially interested in Hamilton papers and Sexton Blakes.
Also Surprise, Bullseye, Startler, Boys' Cinema, Boys' Realm and similar
between 1915-1939.

BENTLEY, J. Breeze. 4 Grenfell Drive, Bradford Moor, Bradford.
Group 5 (a) (b) (d)

Only started re-collecting recently, but has already succeeded in
obtaining 400 Magnets (between 1200-1683); 350 Gems (1200-1663);
100 S.O.L's (Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood stories only). Hopes
to increase materially, especially Magnets.

BLYTHE, Robert. 81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.
Age 32. Groups 5, 7.

Magnets required - any below 1000.

BRANTON, W. Leslie. 63 Thoresby Street, Hull.
Age 37. Group 5.

Present Collection (just started) consists of 100 Magnets between
1425 and 1640. No's wanted, 1920, 1937 inclusive. Also No's 1426-28,
1433, 1440-1446, 1448, 1458-1465, 1469, 1475, 1508-1525, 1528, 1530,
1533, 1548-9, 1551-2, 1554, 1556-60, 1563, 1566-7, 1569, 1572-75.

BURROW, R. 1 Albert Square, Yeadon, Leeds.
Age 37. Group 7.

Requires Nelson Lee (old series) 17, 30, 78, 107, 114, 396, 470.
Gem 1351, 1365, 1391, 1425. Union Jack (Vol.1) 1894, Marvel
(Vol.1 1893).

CALDWELL, Raymond L. P.O. Box 515, Lancaster, Pa., U.S.A.
All Groups.

Possesses one of the biggest collections in the U.S.A. Is also
interested in a number of the English ones, and always willing to trade.

CHILD, A.C. 64 Gilderstone Avenue, Birmingham, 26.
Group 7.

CHIDWICK, Ronald. 96 Morehall Avenue, Folkstone.
Age 15. Groups 5 (c), 6 (a) (c), 7.

Has a modest collection of U.J's, N.L.L's and W.W's, but it is
slowly increasing. Requires 1d Populars with Sexton Blake stories,
also W.W's containing Radio serial. Been collecting one year.

CLOUGH, W.H. 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.
Age 47. Groups 1, 2, 5 (a), 6(a), 7.

Particularly requiring Aldines, Dick Turpins, Pre-St. Frank's,
Nelson Lees, Nugget Library, Peter Flint stories, and Boys' Friend,
Ferrers Lord stories.

COLCOMBE, William Henry. 256 South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.
Age 27. Groups 5 (a), 6.

Specially wanted:- Sexton Blake Libraries (2nd series) No's 198, 227, 255, 266, 278, 302, 314, 334, 341, 346, 350, 363, 372, 414, 481, 492, 507.

COOK, Jack. 178 Maria Street, Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 4.
Groups 5, 6, 7, 8.

Wanted Schoolboys' Own Lib. Greyfriars No's 1-157, 161, 167, 173-192; 194-210: 212, 213, 214, 216, 218, 220, 221, 222, 224-232; 256-250; 252, 254, 256-260; 262-277; 310-316; 331, 356, St. Jim's No's 8-144; 168, 176, 180, 200, 204, 208, 210, 218, 222, 224, 228. Rookwood. Any up to 210.

COOK, James W. 62 Queens Gardens, Bayswater, London, W.2.
Age 39. Group 7.

COOK, Ronald. 6 Sudbrooke Road, Clapham, London, S.W.12.
Age 26. Group 5.

Has been interested particularly in the Magnet for a number of years and at present possesses 175 of them, also 32 Gems, 52 S.O.L's; and three Holiday Annuals.

Is a Customs and Excise Officer which involves wandering round docks, breweries, etc. charging duty on articles liable to customs and excise duty - rather an unpopular job, Mr. Cook declares.

Is also interested in classical music and hiking.

CORBETT, John. 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.
Group 5 (a).

Is anxious to obtain Magnets between 1922 - 1929.

COX, Herbert Reginald. 73 Chelston Road, Ruislip, Middlesex.

Does not now actually collect, but is interested in all aspects of the hobby, and writes about it quite a lot.

DOWLER, Harry. 86 Hamilton Road, Longsight, Manchester 13.
Age 58. Groups 2, 4.

DAINES, Colin. 209 Mile Cross Lane, Norwich.
Age 38. Group 7.

Has a fine collection of Nelson Les, old series. Requires about 66 between 1-100. Until recently had a considerable collection of Gems and Magnets but disposed of them to another collector. Been interested in Old Boys' Books for 30 years.

DARWIN, Wilfred. 76 Western Road, East Dene, Rotherham.
Groups 6, 8.

Has been interested in old boys' papers for many years, but only actually started collecting in 1946. Has now about 200 Union Jacks (mainly 1923-1927), 220 Boys' Magazines, and a number of Sexton Blake Libraries, Modern Boys, Newnes 3d. Dick Turpins, etc.

Possesses a gift for drawing, as is plainly evident from his page of Sexton Blake characters in this issue.

- DICKENSON, D.C. 16 Addison Crescent, London, W.14.
Age 46. Group 5 (a) (b).
Particularly interested in very old Magnets.
- DOLPHIN, Rex. 5 Brays Meadow, Hyde Heath, Amersham, Bucks.
Age 33. Group 6.
Interested solely in Sexton Blake publications. Would like disposal lists from any collector interested. Period of greatest interest 1924-1933.
- EDWARDS, W.E. Mill Green Park (Annexe), Ingatestone, Essex.
Group 5 (a)
- FAYNE, Eric. The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.
Groups 5, 6, 8.
Requires a few Magnets and Gems to complete sets. Also Plucks 1906-7 containing St. Jim's stories.
- FENNELL, Hugh W. 4 Dixon Road, South Norwood, London, S.E.25.
Groups 1, 2, 3.
- FOSTER, George G. 26 Kelso Place, London, W.8.
Group 5.
- FLINDERS, Evelyn B. Roseview, Gosmore Road, Nr. Hitchin, Herts.
Age 38 Group 5.
Collection consists of 350 Gems, 150 Magnets and 70 S.O.L's, B.F. Libs. Particularly interested in Maulverer, Cardew and D'Arcy family stories. Most wanted are Magnets 903 and 692; Popular 251; Gems between 600-920 and Magnets 1917 and earlier.
- FORD, Derek. 42 West Bond Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire.
Group 6.
Anxious to obtain about 25 Detective Weeklies between 219 and end to complete set. During year Union Jack collection greatly increased.
- GALLOWAY, Ron. 146 Vernon Gardens, Whitehall Road, Gateshead-on Tyne, 8.
Age 45. Group 4.
Requires Captain Vols. 30, 36, 37, 45, 48-50.
Herbert Strang's Annual. Years 1911-12, 1914, 1916-18.
Chatterbox, 1910.
Young England, 1911-13, 1916, 1918, 1920.
Scout, Vol. about 1911 containing "The Crimson Aeroplane", by Christopher Beck.
Boys' Own Paper, Vols 40, 42-44.
Purple Book for Boys (Annual). Almost any years between 1910-20.
- GANDER, William Henry. Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.
Age 50. Groups 2, 5(a) (b)
Of pre-1914 papers mainly interested in Boys' Friend. Requires 1922-1927. Requires about 50 Magnets to complete set.

GEAL, John W. 277 King's Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.
Age 27. Group 5(a)

Interested solely in Magnets having over 700. Particularly requires 1-200, and 1161, 1261, 1267 and 1274.

GOCHER, Junr. John Woodward. Victoria Cottage, Sudbury, Suffolk.
Groups 5, 6, 8.

Especially interested in Sexton Blakes, Thrillers, Triumphs, Modern Boys, etc.

Favourite authors: W. Murdoch Duncan, Gwyn Evans, Donald Stuart, Herbert Macrae, and Clifford Gates.

GRAINGER, George P. Alexandra Road, Paynters Lane End, Redruth, Cornwall.
Groups 2, 3, 4, 6 (a).

Requires Boys' Friends 523, 566, 568, 575, 577-581, 603, 604, 616, 1042, 1054, 1073, 1084.

ld. Union Jacks, Aldine Inventions, First Rate, O'er Land and Sess, Detective, Half-Holiday, Cheerful, True Blue, Bullseyes, etc.

McGREEVY, D. 17 Edward Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland.
Groups 5, 7, 8 (Thomsons).

Specially wants Nelson Lees (old series) No's 384-387, 455-463, 502-512, 542-549.

1st New Series No.45 to end of series. The Deluge at St. Frank's.
2nd New Series 51-54.

Boys' Friend Library (2nd Series) 580, 583, 599, 624, 651.

GROOM, William. 52 Wrexham Road, Fairfield Road, Bow, London, E.3.
Groups 5 (a) (b) (d)

GROOMBRIDGE, Cedric H. 12 Barnwell Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.
Age 26. Groups 5, 7.

HARRIS, Arthur. "Ceynton", Llanrhos Road, Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno.
Group 9.

Mr. Harris must have a special group to himself, for he collects comics only, especially those between 1890-1914.

Among wants are Comic Cuts No.18, 13/9/1890 and after No.130.

Funny Cuts No.79, 9/1/1892, and after 130.

Jesters 2-22, 64-68, 70-72, 74-76, 79, 80, 87, 91, 101, 109, 110, 112, 113, 130, 151, 164, 187, 190, 191, 197, 209, 210, 212, 215.

Big Budgets 1-160. Chips, World's Comic, Funny Wonder and Larks.

HARRIS, A.K. 6 Boughton Close, St. John's, Worcester.
Group 5 (b).

HARVEY (Mrs.) 123 Penydre, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.
Group 5 (a) (b)

Has a slight preference for Magnets. Is also a lover of the Biggles books, and very keen on classical music.

HERMAN, John. 51 Burleigh Gardens, Southgate, London, N.14.
Age 17. Groups 5(a) (d) (e), 6.

Also interested in Detective Library and Boys' Friend Library of Group 8. Very anxious to obtain Schoolboys' Own Libraries - Bunter of Bunter Court.

HESS, George H. 40 North Mississippi River St. Paul 4, Miss., U.S.A.
All Groups.

Possesses a huge collection of American dime novels, also quite an impressive number of English ones. Is particularly interested in the Gem and Magnet, and is always pleased to hear from collectors.

HEWITT, H. 14 Wood View, Gawber, Barnsley, Yorkshire.
Group 5.

HOLGATE, Alfred G. 81 Fairlop Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.
Age 38. Groups 3, 5 (a)(b)(d), 6(a).

HOOPER, H.R. 133 Powell House, Lower Clapton Road, E.5.
Groups 5, 6.

Wishes to obtain stories by G. H. Teed in Boys' Friend Library, especially 523. Also Sexton Blake Libraries (2nd series) 647, 646, 615, 447, and stories by Gwyn Evans in S.B.L. and Union Jack.
Schoolboys' Own Lib. 279, 247, 328, 331, 355, and 376.

HORSEY, Alfred L. 60 Salcombe Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.
Groups 1, 2, 3, 5.

HUDSON, Reginald A. 5 Throstle Row, Leeds, 10.
Age 45. Groups 5, 7.

HUGHES, E.V. "Caswell", 25 Hillsboro' Road, Bognor Regis.
Groups 1, 2.

Has only been collecting a short time, but has got together a number of Victorian books including Jack Harkaway, Ned Nimbles, Boys of England, Boys' Comic Journal, Young Men of Great Britain.

Would like to obtain papers between 1905-1918.

Is a journalist by profession.

HUNTER, J.V.B. Stewart. 4 Lulworth Road, Mottingham, London, S.E.9.
Age 49. Groups 1, 2, 3.

Of groups 2 and 3 only requires papers read as a boy between 1909-12.
Is interested in free-lance writing, and would like to hear from fellow collectors with similar interests.

HUMPHRIES, Kenneth. 61 Long Hill Rise, Hucknall, Notts.
Groups 5, 7.

JENKINS, Roger M. Calpe, 2 Town Hall Road, Havant, Hants.
Age 23. Group 5.

Magnets specially wanted: 1090, 1091, 1100, 1114, 1120, 1122, 1129,
1138, 1139, 1142, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1149, 1150, 1153, 1154, 1159, 1161-
1164, 1175, 1184, 1195, 1197, 1198, 1201, 1204, 1205, 1209-1213, 1221,
1223, 1225.

KEELING, Frank. 93 Aldridge Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex.
Groups 5, 7.

Collection mainly consists of Nelson Lees (old series), but is a
reader of most of the popular papers. Hobbies also consist of Motor-
cycling and Photography. Would like to purchase very early numbers of
Motor-Cycling and Motor-Cycle.

KIRBY, Gordon J. 250 Amess Street, North Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria,
Australia.

Age 23. Groups 5, 8.

In Group 8 is particularly interested in School Friend, Schoolgirls'
Own Library, Schoolgirls' Own Weekly, Schoolgirl. Also School Friend
and Schoolgirls' Own Annuals before 1939.

LANDY, Eric R. 14 Nuneston Road, Dagenham, Essex.
Group 3.

Is anxious to obtain the following to complete sets.

Aldine Dick Turpins: No's 105, 111, 113, 114, 115, 119, 124, 172, 179,
180, 181.

Claude Duvels: 5, 29, 30, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47.

LAWSON, A.W. 13, Charles Square, Hoxton, N.1.
Groups 1, 2.

Requires certain vols. of Boys of England, Boys' Comic, Young Men of
Great Britain, Bow Bells, London Journal, Wedding Bells, Young Folks' Paper,
Boys' Standard (both series), Boys' Leisure Hour, and Family Herald.
Want lists gladly sent.

LECKENBY, Herbert. Telephone Exchange, C/o Central Registry, Northern
Command, York.

Age 58. Groups - All.

Is always glad to have offers of papers in Groups 1, 2 and 3, for
research purposes.

LISTER, R.M.S., Raymond George. Low Thatch, West Wrattling, Cambs.
Age 30. Groups 5 (a)(d)(e).

Interested also in Pip and Squeak Annuals and Bubbles Annuals.
Particularly requires 1924 copies and other early numbers.

MACHIN, Hubert. 38 St. Thomas Road, Moor Park, Preston, Lancs.
Group 5.

MARTIN, Thomas H. 37 Twinnell Street, Easton, Bristol, 5.

Does not now actually collect, but his interest is as keen as ever, especially in Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, and Sexton Blakes.

MARTIN, William. 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.7.

Is a progressive dealer who is almost always in a position to supply collectors with papers in all groups.

MULHALL, Patrick. Castlecomer, Co.Kildare, Eire.
Group 1.

McPHERSON, Ernest. 80 Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Somerset.
Age 32. Groups 7, 8.

Requires about 40 Nelson Lees (old series) to complete run from 112. Also Modern Boys (1st series) from 1-160.

MEDCRAFT, John. 64 Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.
Age 54. Groups 1, 2, 3.

Anxious to obtain: Henderson's Lot-o-Fun, 1-100 (1906-8).
Henderson's Pocket Budget Library. Aldine Robin Hood Library 81-88 (original series). Aldine Black Bess Library No's 9, 16, 17.
Aldine Spring-Heeled Jack, Jack Sheppard and Red Rover Libraries.

MURTAGH, J.R. 509 Selwood Road, Hastings, New Zealand.
Age 35. Groups 5, 6, 7.

Main interest Nelson Lees, and is anxious to obtain to complete set: Old series, 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14-17, 22, 27, 31, 31, 35, 40, 42, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53, 59, 60, 62, 64-69, 71-73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 84-86, 88, 92, 102, 103, 220, 230.
1st New series 52. Monster Library 2-6, 10, 11, 17, S.O.L's 27, 212.
Many hundreds of Lees, S.O.L's, and Sexton Blakes for exchange for above.

NEATE, William H. Wenlock, High Street, Burnham, Bucks.
Group 5.

OSBORN, Frank. 24 Harpur Street, Bedford.
Age 52. Groups 1 to 6.

Anxious to obtain Tom Merry's Conquest and Jack Sam and Pete stories in Boys' Friend Library. Early Scouts, Marvel and Kiddie of the Camp (Leighton) bound.

Aldine Dick Turpins, Duvals, and Boys' Own Libraries.

Chums, Vols 3 and 4 (bound).

14 Schoolboys' Own Libraries to complete set.

PACKMAN, Leonard. 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.
Age 43. Groups 5 (a)(b)(c)(d), 6(a), 7.

Leonard Peckman has been interested and a collector for over 30 years, and is well informed on almost all papers published over that period, including the comics.

PACKMAN (contd.)

He disposed of a huge collection in 1943 when he went to Spain on "Diplomatic Service".

Is now concentrating mainly on early Gems and is already in possession of a goodly number.

Leonard has in Mrs. Packman an enthusiast almost as keen as himself. Lucky Len!

He is, of course, also the live president of the London Old Boys' Book Club.

PAGE, Vincent. A. The Modern School, Surbiton, Surrey.
Age 12. Group 5.

Vincent has the distinction of being the youngest member of the circle, and is as keen as the oldest. Has quite a good collection, including 220 Magnets, 30 Gems (including No's 1 and 2), 2 Holiday Annuals and Modern Boys.

PARRATT, C. James. 99 Compton Buildings, Goswell Road, London, E.C.1.
Age 38. Groups 5 (s) (e), 6 (s), 7.

Also collector of "Thrillers" and American fantasy mags. Astounding Stories, Amazing, etc. Would like to hear from other collectors of these.

PARKS, Joseph. 2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorkshire.
Groups 1, 2, 3.

PEETINGELL, Frank. Highfield Lodge, Wise Lane, London, N.W.7.
Age 57. Groups 1, 2, 3.

Is particularly interested in historical stories in ld. Marvels, Union Jacks and Plucks, and is anxious to obtain certain instalments of Boys of St. Dunstons in the U.J.

PICK, Robert. 3 Stonegate Grove, Leeds 7.
Age 49 Groups 5, 6.

Has a few dozen Gems, Magnets and S.O.L's for sale or exchange for others before 1936.

PRIME, Bernard. 43 Mayfield Road, Sanderstead, Surrey.
Age 49. Group 5 (a) (b)

Particularly anxious to obtain Magnets 332, 336, 337 and other early copies of both papers. Prefers the Magnet.

PUCKRIN, Thomas W. 16 Willows Road, Middlesbrough.
Group 2, 5 (s) (b).

Specially interested in early numbers (including halfpenny)

PUCKRIN, Henry Adams. 12 Osborne Road, Middlesbrough.
Group 2.

QUAINE, J.P. 139 Commercial Road, South Yarra, Australia.
Age 65. Groups 1, 2, 3.

Might be called the John Medcraft of Australia, for he possesses 5000 of the Victorian bloods, collected over 40 years. Has never been to England, but has a craze for old London. Met and played host to Barry Ono when he was on his world tour.

Is a second-hand bookseller and a free lance journalist. Has written for the radio, and pioneered Sweeney Todd and other gory characters over the air in Australia.

RHEAD, J.E. "Melverton", Oak Street Head, Belle Vue, Shrewsbury, Salop.
Group 7.

Interested in all series of Nelson Lees, particularly to the old first series. Would like to obtain series where Nipper returns to St. Frank's after being sacked. Also the Mysterious X series.

ROBYNS, John. 41 Friar Road, Brighton, 6.
Group 5 (a) (d)

Requires red-covered Magnets only. Also early S.O.L. Greyfriars stories.

SIDAWAY (Mrs.) The Rise, 84 Wenell Road, Rhiweina, Cardiff.
Group 5.

Has been a devotee of the Gem and Magnet for many years with a preference for the Gem. Has quite a good collection of them.

SATCHELL, Thomas G. 84 Ankerdine Crescent, Shooter's Hill, London, S.E.18.
Age 45. Group 5 (a) (b).

Interested only in red-cover Magnets and blue-cover Gems. Has a fair number of the latter which he would like to exchange for red-cover Magnets.

SHAW, John R. 4 Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.
Age 30. Group 5 (a) (b) (e)

Particularly wishes to obtain Plucks 1906-7 containing St. Jim's stories. Also urgently wanted are Gems (new series) No's 16, 22, 43, 74, 99, 411 and Magnets 148, 339, 400 and 412.

SHEPHERD, James. 1 Athelstan Close, Handsworth, Sheffield.
Groups 5, 6.

Is always pleased to hear from collectors with early Gems and Magnets to offer either for sale or exchange.

SINCLAIR, Tom. 9 Branston Terrace, Leeds 10.
Group 5.

SIMPSON, Clive. Nidd Vile, 36 Borobridge Road, Knaresborough, Yorkshire.
Age 32. Groups 5, 6, 7.

SKINNER, C. Holland. 151 Brixton Hill, London, S.W. 2.
Group 5.

SMITH, Herbert A. 13 New Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.
Groups 5 (e), 7, 8.

Wishes to obtain Boys' Realm new series, and Boys' Magazine.
Suggests the publishing in the C.D. of a list of the non-Hamilton stories.

SMITH, P. The Stores, Mumby, Nr. Alford, Lincs.
Groups 1, 2, 3.

Is anxious to obtain Henderson's 3d. Budget Books, and Wild West Library, also Beedle's Dime, Half Dime and Pocket Library, Arthur Westbrook's Western Weekly and Street & Smith's Far West Library.

SNELL, Frank. Rathgar, 6 Chingswell Street, Bideford, Devon.
Group 5.

STOKES, John C. "Lishegar", 6 Temple Gardens, Rathmines, Dublin.
Group 5 (a) (b).

Is also interested in The Scout, The Prairie Library and Buffalo Bills, and keen to obtain copies of each.

STONE Leon, Elgin Street, Gordon, N.S.W., Australia.
Group 5.

Also possesses the Australian Library of Amateur Journalism consisting of 13,000 papers, photos, relics; the world's third largest collection.

STEELE, Henry. 204 High Street, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex.
Group 1.

STRYPE, Thomas S. 21 Cann Hall Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.
Groups 1, 2.

Wishes to obtain "The Pride of the Ring" by Henry T. Johnson and volume of Captain containing "Acton's Feud" serial by Fred Swainson.

SYKES, A.L. Coton Lane, Tamworth, Staffs.
Groups 1, 2.

Is anxious to obtain certain 1/2d. Boys' Friends. Is also interested in stories by Henry Farmer.

SUTHERLAND, Peard. 3930 W. 35th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.
Age 46. Groups 4, 5.

Collection includes 37 bound vols. of Chums, earliest 1899. 14 bound vols. Boys' Own Annual, earliest 1881; 10 bound vols. "The Scout", earliest 1911; 6 bound vols. The Captain; 500 Gems (including 18 of the 1/2d. series) mainly 1916-1921; 40 Magnets, 100 Populars 40 S.O.L's

SUTHERLAND (Cont'd.)

miscellaneous assortment of Sexton Blake Library, Union Jacks, Marvels, etc. Library also contains 1000 vols. including 12 vols. Strand Magazine, all Talbot Baines Reed's school stories, and others by Guntry Hadathe, Warren Bell, etc. etc.

Anxious to obtain bound vols. Chums prior to 1899, vols. Scout prior to 1911, Gems and Magnets for the period 1916-20 and some earlier ones. Also interested in early Penny Populars.

SUDBOROUGH, Roy Walter. 27 Milton Street, Higham Ferrers, Northants.

Age 30. Groups 5, 6, 7, 8.

Anxious to obtain Sexton Blake Libraries by Donald Stuart and Warwick Jardine. Chiefly interested in papers issued between 1921 and 1933. Modern Boys, Bullseyes, Skippers, etc.

THOMPSON, Gordon. 85 Deerpark Road, Belfast.

Age 33. Groups 5 (a) (d), 7.

Requires about 50 Magnets between 1000-1100. Also a few Nelson Lees between 180-260, and S.O.L's No's 157, 193, 209, 211, 237, and 261.

VOSPER, Leslie. 13 Kinley Road, Shooter's Hill, London, S.E.18.

Group 7.

WAINES, Granville T. 3 Croft Lane, Hollins, Whitefield, Lancs.

Age 45. Groups 5, 6, 7, 8.

Is interested in Double Numbers of any papers. All Amalgamated Press Publications, 1919-1924. Boys' Comic Library, Henderson's Nugget Library, Lot O'Fun, Comic Life, Comic Cuts, Jester, Funny Wonder, Chips, Jan.1913 - Dec. 1915.

WALSH, James. 345 Stanley Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, 20.

Age 39. Groups 5 (a) (d).

Started reading and collecting most of the school and detective story papers just after World War 1. Now reads the Greyfriars stories exclusively and requires Magnets 704-7, 1072, 1284, 1314, 1334, 1387, 1483 and copies for Easter 1932-5-8.

S.O.L's No. 5, 147, 157, 161, 177, 215, 227, 229, 319.

WALKER, Peter A. Chelsea House, Wick, Bristol.

Groups 5 (a) (b) (c) (d)

WAREING, Robert J. 65 Wimborne Road, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton.

Groups 4, 7, 8.

WESTON, G. Neville, Holmwood, Comberton Road, Short Heath, Kidderminster.

Keenly interested in stories and articles on boxing of any period. Is also anxious to obtain anything concerning W. G. Grace.

WHITER, Benjamin, 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.
Group 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

WHITER, Eileen, I. M. 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.
Age 25. Groups 5, 8 (Girls' papers).

Anxious to obtain Schoolgirls' Owns (4d.), Schoolgirls' Weekly (2d.)
and The Schoolgirl (2d.)
Also interested in Magnets and Gems.

WHITER, Robert H. 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, N.22.
Age 24. Groups 4, 5 (a) (b) (c) (e).

WHITMORE, Ian. 3 South Bank Lodge, Surbiton, Surrey.
Age 14. Group 5.

Has been collecting for 3 years and now possesses a modest number
of the Hamilton papers. Is very anxious to obtain No.1 of the Magnet;
also 1920 and 1921 Holiday Annuals.

WHORWELL, Richard. 29 Aspinden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16.
Age 50. Groups 2, 3, 5 (a) (b) (d), 6 (a) (b), 7.

WOOD, John P. "Nostaw", Stockton Lane, York.
Age 34. Groups 5 (a) (b) (d) (e), 6 (b), 7.

Has been collecting for 20 years and has at present about 300 of
the Nelson Lee old series and a big proportion of the later series.
Also many S.O.L.'s, Boys' Friend Libraries and Magnets and Gems.

Would like loan or direct sale of Monster Libraries and various
Nelson Lees, old series. Would take great care of any loaned.
Also requires C.D.'s before September 1948.

Addition

BOLAND, J.A. 12 Cullenswood Gardens, Merton Drive, Sandford, Ranelagh,
Dublin, Eire.

Age 17. Groups 5 (a) (b) (c).

Puts the Magnet first. One of the younger generation who is as
keen as those who knew it in its hey-day. Has now about 70 Magnets
and Gems and eager for more.

ONE STORY, TWO PUBLISHERS:

There was something rather unusual about the appearances
of Henry T. Johnson's famous circus story "The Pride of the
Ring". It first appeared in the Harmsworth "Funny Wonder"
in the late 90's, and ran for three years. Round about
1905 the Aldine Publishing Co. took it over and published
it in 6d. book form, advertising it extensively. (Contd.)

The Golden Days of the "Gem"

By Leonard Packman

The popularity of the "Magnet" is undoubtedly well merited, but I would like to remind "Magnetites" that had it not been for the success of the early "Gem" stories, the "Magnet" would probably have never been born. The first dozen or so years of the "Gem" produced some of the finest characters and stories it has been my pleasure to read. Let us take a brief survey of the "Gem" through the years both preceding the birth of the "Magnet" and later, when "Magnetites" were absorbed in the cachinnations of the one and only W.G.B.

"The "Gem" was born on 16th March 1907, but Tom Merry did not make his bow until No. 3, in "Tom Merry's Schooldays" - at Clavering College. This was followed bi-weekly by "Troublesome Tom", "Our Captain" and "Tom Merry on the Warpath". From No.11 onwards there was no break in the Tom Merry stories commencing with "Tom Merry at St. Jim's." Ferrers Locke appeared on the scene in No.16, "On the Trail". No.21 was "The Triple Alliance" in which the Terrible Three, Study Number 6 and Figgins & Co. joined forces for the first time. No.33 was "Tom Merry's Weekly", No.37 the first Xmas number, was entitled "Tom Merry's Xmas", and No.42 the famous "Figgins Fig Pudding". No.48 "A Curious Competition" completed the 3d. series, and with the advent of the "Magnet", the "Gem" New Series started its brilliant career with "The Gathering of the Clans". Herbert Skimpole was one of the most popular characters at this time, taking the lead in such as No.7 "Skimpole's Detector", No.13 "Skimpole's New Idea", No.18 "Skimpole's Crusade", No.21 "Skimpole's Fancies" and No.26 "Skimpole's Airship". In No.57 St. Jim's welcomes Clifton Dano in "The Feud of the Fourth" and No.64 saw the arrival of Bernard Glyn in "The St. Jim's Inventor". This was followed shortly after by Harry Noble (Kangaroo) in No.69 "A Son of the Empire". No.75 brought the one and only W.G.B. to St. Jim's on a visit in "Gussy's Guest". No.93, the Xmas number for 1909. "The Terrible Three's Xmas Party", was spent in France at the Chateau Gerney.

The next feature was the introduction of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley in No.129 "The Rank Outsider", followed by No.134 "Lumley-Lumley's Luck", No.135 "The Outsider's Choice", No.137 "Lumley-Lumley's Rival", No.138 "Lumley-Lumley Hero", and No.141 "A Shed w in the School".

Then came Levison in No.145 as a Christmas number "Levison the School-boy Detective". This was followed by a series in which Tom Merry had some financial trouble at home. The series ran for 8 or 9 issues and resulted in Tom Merry bringing the little Cockney Joe Frayne for permanent residence in the Third Form. No.158 saw "Lumley-Lumley's Return" after very nearly dying in No.141.

After a number of first class stories such as No.159 "Tom Merry v Jack Blake", No.163 "Skimpole's Pupil", No.167 "The Rival School" and No.168 "Saints v Grammarians" came the "Treasure Island" trio of yarns, closely followed by another series of three with Tom Merry & Co in Africa.

No.197 was another Xmas number "The Ghost of St. Jim's". No.211 "The New Firm at St.Jim's" saw the arrival of Redfern, Owen and Lawrence, the three New House scholarship boys, followed by No.212 "The Great Barrage-Out at St.Jim's." Another period of fine "Shorts" including No.223 "Figgins' Folly", No.224 "Gussy's Canadian Cousin", No.242 "The Prefect's Plot", No.244 "The Flooded School", No.250 "Nobody's Study" (Xmas number), No.251 "Grimes of the Fourth", No.261 "Figgins & Co's Feud", No.264 "Fatty Wynn Professional", No.277 "Tom Merry's Special Number", No.302 "The Mystery of the Painted Room" (Xmas number) and No.304 "The Cockney Schoolboy - introducing Hammond, lead up to perhaps the most popular series the "Gem" ever produced, the first set of Talbot tales starting with No.334 "The Toff" followed by No.335 "Hero and Rascal", No.336 "The Hidden Hand" and No.337 "The Parting of the Ways". Some further excellent Talbot yarns interspersed with other fine stories were No.351 "The King's Pardon", No.352 "Working His Way", No.353 "Saving Talbot", No.358 "Talbot's Triumph", No.359 "Talbot's Christmas", No.361 "The Cell of the Past", No.362 "Cast Out from the School", No.363 "Loyal to the Last" and No.364 "The St.Jim's Recruit".

No.380 was the first of an original four week series commencing with "Kildere for St.Jim's", No.381 "A Son of Scotland", No.382 "A Hero of Wales" and No.383 "Tom Merry for England".

Probably the finest Talbot story of all was No.393 "The Housemaster's Homecoming" (double number). Then came No.394 "The Jew of St.Jim's" introducing Dick Julien. No.436 "Under Gussy's Protection" said goodbye to the dear old green (or pale blue) cover, to be replaced by the blue and white in No. 437 (Outram). Then came some of the best blue and white "Gems" including No.440 "Moneybags Minor", No.441 "Too Clever by Half", No.444 "Every Inch a Hero", No.447 "Holiday Camp", No.448 "Heroes of the Fourth", No.451 "Levison Minor", No.460 "In the Seats of the Mighty" (Xmas number), No.462 "Levison Minor's Luck" and No.468 "Levison for St.Jim's". * "Strange Secret".

In No.475 Cardew arrived in "Cardew of the Fourth". Nos.506, 507 and 508, "The St. Jim's Parliament", "Grundy the Patriot" and "Pepper's Gold" were the well known "Pepper" series, and No.510 "The Shadow of the Past", the last of the Xmas double numbers, reintroduced Outram, with Levison playing the leading part. No.518 "Manners Vendetta" introduced Roylance. No.527 "Rival Forms", heralded one of the longest, perhaps the longest series in the history of the paper. Comprising about 20 numbers, every conceivable kind of contest was engaged in between the members of the Shell and Fourth forms.

Then came the 16 week series in which W.G.Bunter came to St.Jim's in place of his cousin Wally. This series ran from No.571 "Billy Bunter at St.Jim's" to No.585 "Bunter - and Bunter". A month or two later came an eleven issue caravanning series commencing with No.595 "The Schoolboy Caravanners" and concluding with No.605 "Ructions on the Road", the date of which was September 13, 1919.

Lack of space precludes me from mentioning all the outstanding stories during this brilliant 12-year period, but I am sure that many I have named will awaken happy memories in those of us whose first love was the "Dear Old Gem".

The History of the "Popular"

By Roger M. Jenkins

The Popular in my day seemed inevitably connected with Rookwood stories, mainly I think because the Holiday Annual used to invite us on its last page to renew our acquaintance with Jimmy Silver & Co. therein each week. Yet the Popular was never the special preserve of Rookwood any more than it was of Greyfriars, and thus it seems rather odd that it should be thought of exclusively in connexion with the stories Charles Hamilton wrote under the pseudonym of "Owen Conquest". Perhaps the explanation is that after the Boys' Friend ceased publication with the issue on 31 Dec. 1927, the Popular was the only weekly paper in which Rookwood stories appeared. The Magnet and Gem holding the undoubted sway they did in those days there was no need to mention in the Holiday Annual that Tom Merry and Harry Wharton also graced the pages of the Popular as well.

The Penny Popular, as it was called in its early days, made its first appearance on the 12th of October 1912. It was printed on green paper not dissimilar to that of the Boys' Friend. At first, the only Hamilton school represented was St. Jim's by a series of reprints of the earlier stories. After a while Greyfriars reprints appeared, together with Sexton Blake, Jack Sam and Pete stories, and many others. As a rule there were only three different stories in each issue; so the combinations changed often. The first Rookwood reprint occurred in No. 237 (dated 21/4/17) entitled "The Rookwood Waxworks", but Rookwood seemed to be something of a Cinderella sister in the trio and was allotted only four pages at the end of the issue. From this time onward, however, the caption on the front became "Harry Wharton & Co. - Jimmy Silver & Co. - Tom Merry & Co." and thus it remained until the end of the first series of the Penny Popular.

Before the paper shortage became acute in 1917 the Popular was printed with two columns per page with twenty-four pages per issue. After then, however it was reduced to twenty pages with three columns per page. The paper, which had been getting a lighter green in colour all through the war was changed to white in June 1917 and remained that colour, though it seemed to be a very off-white, and was sometimes tinged with green. In 1918 the print became very small (something like the last issues of the Schoolboys' Own Library in 1940), and on the 30th March 1918 the last issue of the first series appeared in which a message from the Editor - indeed a rarity - announced that "During the last year or so the Penny Popular has increased in popularity by leaps and bounds, but in these severe times, when there is practically a famine in paper, even some of the most popular journals are compelled to suspend publication." And so the paper was incorporated in the Boys' Friend. Having survived four years of war, it was forced to go under just when the war was almost finished.

WANTED DETECTIVE WEEKLIES, Union Jacks, Blake Libraries,
1st, 2nd Series only. Cuttings. D. Ford, 42, West Bond
Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

The Popular made its second debut on the 24th of May 1919. It was still called the Penny Popular, but over the word "Penny" was printed an arrow pointing to "1134" - a sign of the times! This lasted only until all the old readers had had time enough to become acquainted with the new series, however, and in August 1920 the word "Penny" was dropped. There was nothing else to distinguish it from the last issues of the old series of the Penny Popular. With No. 40 of the new series it was increased to 20 pages with the words "Permanently Enlarged" on the cover. No. 107 registered only 16 pages, but this was due to the inclusion of Billy Bunter's Weekly inside which occupied 4 pages privileged to have their own numbering with Roman numerals! This privilege soon ceased, however, since it was no doubt considered that the paper might seem smaller than it was. (Billy Bunter's Weekly appeared originally in Nos. 673 and 679 of the Magnet, and in February 1921 was transferred to the Popular. Later it was even honoured with a place in the Holiday Annual!) Finally, in 1922 the Popular was "Greatly Enlarged" and boasted 28 pages which became its normal complement right up to the end. Its price also became twopence at this time.

Even the Popular, which was ostensibly a paper for reprints, did not escape the clutches of those ambitious scribblers who thought it was the easiest thing in the world to turn out stories in the Hamilton vein with Hamilton characters. In No. 18 of the New Series the front cover announced "Entirely Original School Tales". Needless to say, one series at least was nothing more than a catalogue of sporting events (the Greyfriars one) in which matches were played against every county in England. During the eighty-three weeks in which these Greyfriars stories appeared, the author of them - could it be J. N. Pentelow? - succeeded in bringing a character called Dennis Carr into every one of them. Genuine Rookwood stories returned in issue No. 40 dealing with the arrival of Oswald, and it is interesting to note in this connexion that these twenty-two spurious Rookwood stories were probably the only ones which were not written by Charles Hamilton himself. The last substitute St. Jim's story occurred in No. 51 after which St. Jim's retired for a while. St. Jim's stories which had been so prominent in the first series of the Popular were very much a back number in the new series. Finally, in the last issue of 1920 - No. 101 - genuine Greyfriars reprints appeared once again.

In 1924 the colour of the printing on the front cover was changed to blue, whilst in 1926 red was also added; so the effect was not unlike that of the Gem. It was on April 24, 1926 (issue No. 1298) that the Rookwood stories made their last appearance in the Boys' Friend after 583 weeks of continuous performance therein, and this probably had the effect of transferring a number of new readers to the Popular. But the Popular had by no means adhered to its original policy of reprinting stories of the three Hamilton schools. The rot had set in, so to speak, with No. 52 in which a cinema story displaced St. Jim's, and from this time one "foreign" serial (or two when the number of pages was increased) became the rule rather than the exception. In No. 82 Ferrers Locke made his first appearance in the Popular, albeit only for three weeks, but he was soon back again and he appeared from time to time right up to the end. In 1922 those famous mythical stories about Frank Richards' schooldays at Cedar Creek were contributed by a gentleman who signed himself "The ...ford".

It must surely be unique in the annals of story-writing for an author to have used one pen name in writing about the fictitious boyhood of another of his pen names.

"Martin Clifford". They were, of course, written by Charles Hamilton. It must surely be unique in the annals of story-writing for an author to have used one pen-name in writing about the fictitious boyhood of another of his nom-de-plumes.

Although Charles Hamilton supplied the larger proportion of the material for the Populer, other authors like David Goodwin and Geo. E. Rochester (who contributed the famous "Freak of St. Freda's") also rendered service. But one cannot help coming to the conclusion that his stories were the most popular, taken all in all, and on 21st January 1928 the Rio Kid was introduced to the world via the medium of the Populer. This series ran from No. 469 to No. 587 continuously, and also reappeared after that. Hawy Searles Brooks also supplied some material with St. Frank's reprints, the first one being in No. 489 and entitled "How Reggie Pitt came to St. Frank's". These St. Frank's stories lasted about a year and were then replaced by an obscure adventure story.

The illustrations in the Populer, so far as reprinted stories were concerned, seemed to have been taken from the papers in which these tales originally appeared. This is the only explanation one can adduce for the shockingly amateurish illustrations that accompanied the St. Frank's stories from No. 489 especially when compared with the Rookwood ones, for instance, in the same issues. The Greyfriars ones at this time, however, were exceptionally fine, and exceeded anything in the contemporary Magnets; these illustrations remind one of the very best in the Holiday Annual, with nothing overlooked - the cut of the new Greyfriars jackets (which superseded Etons), the familiar stripes on the upholstery of the armchairs, and even the shine of the wood on the polished desks was represented. Now and again even for Greyfriars stories original illustrations were used: in No. 626 of the Populer, for instance the cover was an adaptation of Magnet No. 973, the story was partly reprinted, and two illustrations were exactly reproduced.

Looking back, one cannot fail to appreciate the very liberal fare which we were offered for twopence - Greyfriars, Rookwood, St. Frank's, St. Jim's, and the Rio Kid every week! Surely enough to satisfy any taste! But this combination was too good to last, and soon after St. Frank's disappeared, St. Jim's followed it. One senses that at this point when the make-up of the Populer had reached its zenith the circulation was beginning to drop to its nadir. At any rate, change seems to have been the order of the day, and in 569 Ferrers Locke was welcomed back again with a considerably more generous allocation of space than he had ever been given before. On the 12th of April 1930 an unprecedented step was taken, and issue No. 585 appeared without Rookwood being represented therein for the first time since the new series had begun eleven years ago! It was replaced by the Calcroft school stories by Sidney Drew, and although Rookwood reappeared in No. 583 one could not help concluding rather sorrowfully that it was there by grace and no longer by right. From then onwards it alternated with Calcroft. But readers must have felt that the Populer was in very dangerous waters when such an old-established serial as the

Rookwood one was withdrawn. Greyfriars was thus the only school which was able to maintain its position in the Popular right the way through the new series.

In No. 587 the Rio Kid made a temporary retirement after his long run, and went into limbo until No. 600. He was replaced by a serial entitled "The Popolaki Patrol" by "Charles Hamilton", curiously enough the only time his name appeared in the Popular. In No. 590 Frank Richards' schooldays returned, but this constant readjustment was unable to save the Popular, and it finally fell, No. 628, which was published on the 7th of February 1931, being the last issue. It was replaced by the Ranger, which, according to one contemporary advertisement, was a "Spensing Weekly Treat". As a matter of fact, the Ranger had very little in common with the Popular; it really was more similar to the Thomson papers.

Was the Popular a success? Commercially speaking, the answer must be yes, for the first series ran for five and a half years, while the second lasted for over twelve. From the readers' point of view, the answer is not so certain. To the extent that it enabled a new generation to familiarise itself with stories that had delighted a previous one, it was definitely in credit. On the other side of the ledger, however, must be recorded the dire effect of attempting to cram so many different stories in each week. This was of no moment where the serials were written specially for the Popular, as was the Rio Kid serial, but where it was a case of adapting a long story originally written for the Gem or the Magnet, the resulting reprint in the Popular was often severely hacked about. As Mr. Hamilton himself says, "How one's poor works were chipped, chopped, peeled, and mangled to fit into the bed of Procrustes.... how they survived such handling is a mystery." Nevertheless, they were made to fit, and the Rookwood ones came off best in this respect since they had never been so long originally as the Greyfriars and St. Jim's ones. But despite all distortions and abbreviations (and the Popular in this respect was far more culpable than the Schoolboys' Own Library) the Popular was able at the time to fulfil the growing demand for more stories about the Hamilton schools, and was unique in the respect that it was a form of weekly reprints of stories about schools which were themselves appearing weekly in other papers at the same time. One cannot help wondering whether we shall ever see the like of the Popular again.

WANTED: Boys Realms, Boys Magazines, Old Series, Nelson Lees, 1920 Holiday Annual, or any duplicates you have to spare. Exchange welcomed for any books. **FOR SALE:** 2nd and 3rd Series, Nelson Lees, 6d each. Holiday Annuals, 1925-26-27-28. H.A. Smith, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Library, No. 371, in good condition. Frank Richards, Rose Lawn, Kingsgate, Broadstairs, Kent.

Advertise in the C.D.

With Blake on their Spot

By William Colcombe

During his long career as a detective, Sexton Blake has visited nearly every corner of the globe on the track of criminals great and small. Africa, America, North and South, the Barron Wastes of the Frozen North, China, India and even the unknown land of Tibet have all been used as a background to the adventures of the best known detective in fiction. Most Blake authors have a favourite setting for their stories, some are at their best in smoky London, others in the Mill towns of Lancashire, while others use distant climes as a background. Much can be learned from a study of different authors' works of many peoples and lands both home and abroad.

Foremost of all Blake authors in the description of scenes was George Hamilton Teed. There was scarcely a part of the world that Blake did not visit under his pen. He will probably be best remembered for his Chinese stories and many readers of "The Union Jack" and "The Sexton Blake Library" must have gained their earliest knowledge of Chinese ways of life and also the politics of "the flowery land" from Mr. Teed's works. Amongst the best of his Chinese yarns were four that appeared in "The Union Jack" in 1927, "The Adventure Of The Yellow Beetle", "The Temple of Many Visions", "Doomed To The Dragon" and "The House Of Wooden Lanterns" and a serial that appeared in the same paper that same year entitled "The Black Abbott Of Cheng Tu". Considerable knowledge of the internal intricacies of Chinese life can be gained from these fine stories.

Another little known spot that Teed used as background was the island of Hayiti. Featured in the stories of this notorious island was one Marie Galante, a negress who was a High Priestess of the unholy cult of Voodoo and with her as a central character Teed described some of the rites practised by followers of this terrible religion, such as the offering of a young girl as human sacrifice. Probably the best story of Hayiti was in "The Sexton Blake Library" No.376 (second series) entitled "The Isle of Horror".

"Sexton Blake Library" No.707 (second series) "The Mystery of Gold Digger Creek" was a story of the island of New Guinea. This island off the coast of Australia saw some of the hardest fighting of the Pacific War and some idea of the nature of the terrain can be got from this G.H. Teed story. Another of his yarns set in New Guinea was featured in "Detective Weekly" No.16 entitled "Gamblers' Gold". As you will have guessed from these titles New Guinea is a gold mining area and before the war (and perhaps even still to-day) gold was flown across the Stanley mountains to the coast for shipment to Australia.

George Hamilton Teed knew Paris intimately (he lived in that city for some years) and wrote many stories of the French capital. He also wrote of Morocco and some of his best George Mersden Plummer stories were when that slippery individual was second in command to the leader of the rebel forces in Spanish Morocco. His story "The Terror of Tangier" gives readers a glimpse of the old and colourful city.

In contrast to Teed, Allen Blair rarely left Britain in his stories and even when he did it was never farther than the Continent. Blair wrote with first hand knowledge of the Southern Counties, notably Surrey and Berkshire and these counties were the ground over which Blake and Tinker followed Pedro on many a trail. The two great Northern counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire also featured in his stories and their well known ranges provided a fine background to Pedro's often incredible display of canine ability for tracking. A close study of Blair's many stories will give a really good idea of the topography of these two counties.

Another author who kept the action of his stories at home was Donald Stuart. His speciality was the small English country village, though he rarely identified his background with any real place. John Hunter (who still writes regularly for the Sexton Blake Library) is another who rather likes his stories in the English countryside, mostly imaginary villages in Surrey. From these two writers the reader can gain a little idea of the layout of a typical village and the folk who inhabit them.

Cecil Hayter, creator of the Sir Richard (Spots) Losely and Lobangu series was a superb writer of African stories and produced many fine tales of the interior of the Dark Continent. One of these was rather reminiscent of Edwy Searles Brooks "Lost World" series for the "Nelson Lee Library". It was called "The Forest Of Ghosts" and in it Sexton Blake fights prehistoric animals in addition to the usual crooks.

Rex Hardinge travelled extensively in Africa and this is reflected in his many efforts. He was actually more at home in South and South West Africa, and in his first two stories for "The Union Jack", "The Black Cloud" and "The Victim Of The Veldt" he describes conditions and life on the Orange farms of South Africa. In some of his later yarns he gave a good idea of the perils undergone by explorers in their efforts to open up the vast tracts of this largely unknown continent.

Yet another who gave us somewhat vivid pictures of life and conditions in Africa was "the Grand Old Man" amongst Blake authors, William Murray Graydon. He wrote mostly of East Africa, the territory now known as Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. He also used Indo-China in several stories which were, as far as I know, unique. For I cannot find any trace of Blake visiting this part of the world in yarns by other authors.

Another of the old timers, Andrew Murray, wrote stories set in many climes, and once again he was about the only one to feature Russia (excepting perhaps Gilbert Chester). One of his stories deals with Afghanistan, the country between the borders of India and Russia, while another, entitled "North Of 55°" took Blake to the land of perpetual snow, the Frozen North. Andrew Murray's namesake, Robert Murray, author of the now famous "Criminals' Confederation" series, also wrote of the colder regions, one or two yarns being his only excursions outside England.

But I think that the best of all the yarns dealing with Arctic Regions came from that not quite so well known writer, L. Charles Douthwaite and was entitled "The Riddle Of The Yukon". In real life Mr. Douthwaite had rather close connections with the Royal Canadian Canadian Mounted Police and there is no doubt that he knew his Northern

territories like the palm of his hand. The story mentioned above told how Sexton Blake tracks a wanted crook from Montreal through hundreds of miles of snowy wastes. He was aided by the R.C.M.P. of course. L. G. Southwite tells us in his own words that "the man who says that wolves will not attack man does not know a hungry wolf pack," and the attack by a hungry wolf pack is only one of the exciting incidents of the trail through ice and snow.

Canada is also the setting of many of the "Moonslayer" stories by Stanley Gordon, in this case it is usually life in the forests and lumber camps that is depicted. On the whole though, Canada has been rather neglected by Blake's chroniclers. The creator of Gunga Dass, H. Gregory Hill, wrote some fine yarns of India and set out some very realistic descriptions of the life and customs of Indians both high and low caste. The grinding poverty of the peasant, the trickery of the fakirs and the power they wielded in this land of untold religions, are all touched upon in his stories. In two of them, "The Great Museum Mystery" and "The Loot of Nana Sahib" he gives an idea of the romance that lies in India's little known history. H. Gregory Hill's modern counterpart, Anthony Parsons, treats life in India from a different angle. This time we see the country as viewed from Government House, the efforts to hush up even the slightest breath of scandal against the ruling caste. From Parsons' work some little idea of the lives and work of the many Englishmen who devoted a lifetime in administering and governing the land of over 180 millions, can be got. Parsons also gave some excellent impressions of life in war-time Cairo and Alexandria in his stories "The Riddle Of The Disguised Greek", "The Crime of the Cashiered Major" and "The Mystery of the Cairo Express".

Though most Blake authors set stories in London at one time or another, none excelled John G. Brandon in his descriptions of life in the Metropolis, whether it was a Chinese den in the heart of Dockland, night life in Soho, or high life in the West End, he gave vivid impressions of the scene. His habit of describing a trail through London street by street helped readers familiar with London to build up a mental picture of the unfolding story, and even one who did not know the Capital was helped by the mention of well known names and places.

The Mill towns of Lancashire were the stamping ground of Lester Bidston. Nearly all his stories have a background, life in the cotton mills. "The Mystery of Oldham", "The Phantom of the Mill", "Gang's Prisoners", "The Cup Final Crime", "The Mill of Fear" were all set in Lancashire mill towns, most of these stories being written in the nineteen-thirties when the great slump was at its height and the life of poverty and distress of the people who lived in small, begrimed houses in narrow cobbled streets, was in the news.

Pierre Quiroule was another versatile writer who visited a large variety of places in his stories. I remember the Island of Corsica in "The Mystery of the Missing Envoy", Latvia in "The Vanished Million", India in "The Sacred City", Cuba in "The Havana Mystery", but his most interesting were those set in the Balkan countries, such as "The Outlaw of Jugo Slevia" and "The Mystery of the Albanian Avenger", interesting glimpses of life and conditions in these countries, now hidden behind the Iron Curtain were given.

Coutts Brisbane was another who varied his background, among the more interesting were one or two of the West Indies. These islands, famous for their Banane and Sugar plantations, form a picturesque setting for Blake to go crook hunting. Another favourite spot of Brisbane's was Scotland, and his story "Secret of the Loch" was the best I've read of this part of Britain.

In grim contrast to the tropic heat of the West Indies is the wet, cold atmosphere of the mining areas of Durham and Northumberland, favourite spots for Anthony Skene's stories. Yorkshire also figured largely in this author's works as it did in a number of others, notably Gwyn Evan's "Miss Death" series, each story of this character being set in a different Yorkshire city.



Mr. Croft Passes By

By Jack Corbett

Readers will recall the meeting of Mr. Croft (Mr. Quelch's double) and Mr. J. Corbett at Broadstairs, and here is another article concerning this interesting gentleman.

One morning while my wife, kiddies, and self were having breakfast, the front door bell suddenly gave a resounding peel. "Postman," I said laconically, and my small son, Ian, lost no time in scampering away to fetch the letter brought by that messenger of good and bad news - the postman.

"Here you are," cried Ian, pattering back with a neatly typed sealed letter for "Daddy". "Thanks, fly-blow," I said, patting my small son's "napper", and then busied myself in opening the letter. I could have shouted with joy at what my eyes beheld, and could not resist from saying "Oh, good," accompanied by a thump on the table, which brought a remark from Madge, my wife, about better table manners in front of the children!! I reproduce the welcome letter here:-

See View Cottage,
Pegwell Bay,
Nr. Broadstairs.
20/7/48.

Dear Mr. Corbett,

You will doubtless be surprised to hear from me, but I am still mindful of our chance meeting in Broadstairs last year, when you recognised me as "Mr. Quelch's" double.

Certain business will necessitate my being in Weston-super-Mare next week, and I would very much like to see you again. I believe the journey from your city is comparatively short, and so any day after the 27th inst., will suit me, and I look forward to seeing you when we may resume our chat on "Greyfriars" if we have time.

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY R. CROFT.

Feeling very elated by this letter from one whom you will recall was the gentleman I met accidentally while on holiday at Broadstairs, I passed the neatly written sheet over to Madge, while our younger son, Barry, busied himself by taking an imaginary letter from the torn envelope and putting it back again!

After due consideration I thought I would do well to travel by one of the many luxury coach trips which give one about three hours or so in comfort. So by the end of that week all was set for a further meeting

with the exact double of "Mr. Quelch" - in fact, one who was a close friend of our beloved author, Frank Richards, and who had been for many years the inspiration for the Remove Master.

Well, the eagerly awaited day arrived, rather fine, but not real summer weather, but one must be thankful for even a watery sun these days. After the goodbyes and good wishes from my family, I set off for the spot where I boarded one of those streamlined giants of the road, and settled back in well sprung luxury for the speedy run west. As we travelled along the sun grew more powerful, and by the time the Weston outskirts were reached, a blue sky, plus the smell of the sea, was everyone's reward. The coach swung smoothly on to the sea front, and purred its way into the large parking place midway along the promenade. After alighting, I walked through a gap in the wall that led to some round tables placed there by an enterprising cafe owner, from which point I had a good view of the car park and promenade.

Just then I discerned among the gaily bedecked holiday makers a tall figure in neat clerical grey suit hurrying towards the spot, and sure enough it was Mr. Croft. I cannot help telling you again how his likeness to Mr. Quelch was vividly apparent - the quick gait and angular features, the "sideboards" and neat shoes, and as he drew nearer I saw the knarled face light up with a kindly smile plus a bright gleam in his penetrating eyes. Stepping forward with hand extended I received a very strong handshake, and he spoke in that rasping, yet not unkind voice of Greyfriars fame. "Good morning, and welcome to Weston" he said kindly. "You are looking very well, sir, and I cannot say how very much I appreciate your taking this special trip to meet, er - 'Mr. Quelch'." We both laughed heartily, and after returning the greetings, we stepped across the road on to the Prom and observed the sea shimmering in the warm sunshine, and how bright the foreshore looked with the innumerable gaily coloured bathing costumes worn by the holiday makers. The time was then about 12.15 p.m. and it was decided that we should have a rest and chat on the beach, so that we were soon reclining at ease in deck chairs, close to the rippling sea amid the cheerful laughter of scampering children.

"This makes one feel young again," said Mr. Croft, settling himself more comfortably. "I cannot really believe that I ever did such things myself back in the dim past." I laughed and observed that one is only as old as one feels, which is really a truth that cannot be denied. Matters, of course, simply had to drift towards "Greyfriars", and soon we were discussing the "Magnet", Mr. Hamilton, the collecting hobby generally, and lastly the "Collector's Digest".

"It is really amazing how Mr. Leckenby manages to produce this very excellent book combined with his busy and somewhat nerve-racking post at the switchboard," observed Mr. Croft, "and it certainly proves what one can do under great difficulties when the inspiration and keenness are there." I nodded assent and have certainly marvelled many times myself at "Leck's" feat of endurance in this respect.

What about ordering Next Year's Annual ?

"After chatting thus for some time, Mr. Croft looked at his watch. "I think we will wend our way back to my cousin's home, where," he said smiling, "a good meal would not, I am sure, be unwelcome." This idea was very good in view of the sea breeze and journey I had undertaken, so leaving the pleasant beach we returned to the prom, from where Mr. Croft led me up one of those rather hilly side roads which are a feature of Weston-super-Mare. I noted we were in the area called Park Place, and after turning to the right past white stone houses fronted by richly flowered gardens, we turned left and were in a quiet road bordered by large grey stone houses screened by low stone walls and thick hedges.

Mr. Croft then stepped aside for me to enter through a wrought iron gate which fronted a stately house of grey stone, its foreground richly turfed and bordered by many blooms.

In the comfortable hall Mr. Croft introduced me to his cousin, Miss Kimberley, who seemed eager to make my acquaintance. "Oh, yes," she said in a rich voice, "My cousin tells me over and over again of your meeting in a little cafe near Broadstairs, and I read your account of it in Mr. Croft's, or shall I say Henry's copy of the "Digest Annual." I smiled at this remark, and said I was glad that she too was a reader of our "yearly", and learned that old papers had a fascination for her, although she was not a collector. "Well come now, do sample my cooking while it's all nice and hot, sir," said our hostess smilingly. So without a second bidding Mr. Croft and myself entered a sunlit diningroom, whose neat jacobean furnishing gave an air of warmth and homeliness. Seated by a large french window, overlooking a beautiful rose garden, we ate a well served meal, afterwards reclining in our chairs over coffee and cigarettes, where, once again, the conversation switched over to "Greyfriars" and its many surroundings.

Somehow, during the dinner, the thought had occurred to me that my friend seemed pre-occupied at times, as if some matter of importance was weighing upon his mind, but I had dismissed the idea, thinking that the steep journey from the sea had tired Mr. Croft for a man of his years. In the course of our talk after dinner, however, some of his replies had been slightly hesitant, a procedure so very unlike Mr. Quelch's double that I ventured to query my companion was feeling well.

"Mr. Croft," I said, looking fully at him, "Excuse my being personal, but out of interest, I somehow feel you do not seem to be quite so well. I hope you have not a summer cold developing due to our wretched summer?" Mr. Croft made a slight almost imperceptible start, and then looked earnestly at me, leaning forward in his chair, he spoke. "I appreciate your concern and thought for me, my boy, more than I can express, but I assure you my health, physically at least, is very good, and - ", went on my friend in his clear rasping voice, "my athletic days at school stand me in good stead, although," he smiled, "boys forget that I ever was really keen on sport, but -", here Mr. Croft's face became rather grim, "no man of my years finds it easy to face the prospect of beginning a new life in a new country." I could only look and wonder at this last remark. How this prospect could face my friend, a retired schoolmaster, a close friend of Mr. Richards, and one who had a comfortable home near

Broadstairs, seemed a complete mystery, and I could scarcely believe my ears. "You see, Mr. Corbett," continued my companion, "a very dear friend of former schooldays, and one who helped me to obtain my position at Repton, has suffered the sudden loss of his wife, and being a man of few outside interests, the poor fellow is completely alone far from his own country; in fact, his home is in New Zealand."

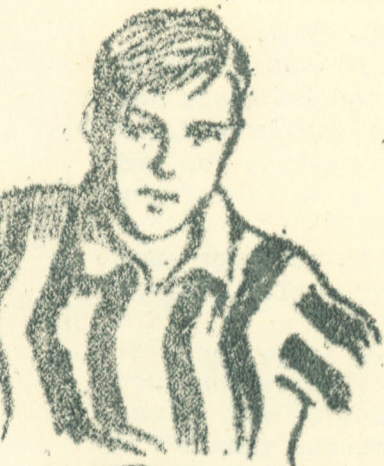
This information and its obvious meaning came as a bombshell. That a man of Mr. Croft's calibre would help a lifelong friend in any way he could was quite understandable, but that a man of his years should entertain the idea of going to a new country to begin a new life was more than amazing, almost heroic in fact. Then Mr. Quelch's double spoke. "You see," he said, "when I was a young man, in fact, during the time in my life when every penny meant much to me, fate brought this gentleman and myself together, and through his believing in my prowess as one who had a genius for guiding and teaching boys, he did much to give me a good place in life, both spiritually and practically, and," - continued my friend - "I believe I have justified his expectations." "So that now he is in need of help, Mr. Croft," I said, "you are going out to him in New Zealand?" My companion nodded assent, and once again the character of the Remove Master came home to me as portrayed by F.R.

"What about your friends, sir?" I asked quietly. "It must need courage to go to a strange country where all is new." Mr. Croft looked hard at me, and his face became very grim, almost hard. "There are things that I cannot think about, Mr. Corbett," he said quietly, but in a firm tone - "All I know is that a man who did much for me, at no small effort to himself, is in need of me now, and unusual as it is for a man of my years to seek adventure abroad, it is a call I cannot ignore."

Just then the door opened and our hostess entered the room. "Well, gentlemen," she said in her rich voice. "You look none the worse for my cooking, and surely as Mr. Corbett has little time in Weston, you would do well to take the sea breeze." Her cousin rose from his seat, and resting one hand on his chair, his angular face relaxed into a smile as he looked at this very pleasant lady. "Yes, I think you are right," he said, and added more slowly, "I have informed Mr. Corbett of my future intentions concerning my old friend in New Zealand." Then turning to me, Mr. Croft remarked, "Of course, my cousin thinks the idea fantastic, but on the decision to go I am quite adamant."

Miss Kimberley set down on the arm of one of the handsome jacobean chairs and nodded assent. "That is correct, Mr. Corbett," she said, "but after all, Henry is a man who knows his own affairs best, and is a man of iron where duty is concerned, and so I wish him everything that is fortunate and may God bless him." A short silence followed that lovely little speech, and in spite of the bright sunshine, an air of sadness seemed to pervade the room. But Mr. Croft quickly resumed his crisp sharp manner, and, looking at his watch, suggested a walk up to Madeira Cove. Not having time to return to the house, I bade Miss Kimberley a hearty good-bye and thanked her for the kindly hospitality shown.

A Sub paid to-day, is a Sub less to-morrow



Tracy



Grant



Grant



London



Kemp



Mr. Kestiffe



Tracy



Tracy



London

Robert H. White
1948-

Mr. Croft and myself then walked briskly down the hill on to the promenade and strolled leisurely towards the pleasant end of Weston where the rocks and natural scenery abound for the nature lover. "Well, my boy," said Mr. Croft, after a few moments of silence, "I hope the news has not saddened your day, but I certainly felt that I would like to see you before my trip down under, and I am sure you will agree with my decision." "Certainly, Mr. Croft," I said quietly, "but it does not make the fact of losing someone associated with things that I, and many others, hold very dear any easier."

My friend smiled. "I appreciate the great compliment," he said, "but understand, my boy, that for myself the task is indeed a colossal one. For as you can imagine, it is no light thing to lose such an old and highly esteemed friend as Mr. Richards, and, I believe -", here Mr. Croft gave a short dry laugh, "Mr. Richards will not like losing his Mr. Quelch! But seas do not really sever the cords that bind friendship, only physically at least."

"Have you seen Mr. Richards lately," I asked, and Mr. Croft nodded assent. "Only recently," he answered, "and I found him in really excellent health: while his new Bunter books are very well ahead, and, in my opinion, are a splendid opportunity for anyone to possess "Greyfriars" in well constructed permanent form."

At last we reached a flat plateau of rocks and sat down by the water's edge. We sat and discussed animatedly "Greyfriars", collecting, the future of boys' papers, and books generally. When the time was about 3.30 p.m. we strolled back over the shingle towards the steps with the intention of obtaining a beach tray of tea and bread and butter.

Just then I noticed Mr. Croft draw himself up suddenly, and his gaze became fixed on a section of high rocks. "Young rascals," he ejaculated, and his hand grasped convulsively on his walking stick. Oh, how I wish you could have seen Mr. Croft's face at that moment! - nothing could have been more like Mr. Quelch!! His face had become grim, and his mouth set in a tight line, while his eyes were hard and glinted like dagger points. Following his gaze I could have laughed had it not been for the serious and grim attitude my friend had adopted, for half hidden between two large boulders were two local schoolboys, enjoying a quiet smoke.

There was silence for a moment, then with the agility of a cat, Mr. Croft almost leapt across the rocks and reached the spot where the young "sportsmen" were surprised by the sudden interruption of their "menly" pastime. I followed up, rather alarmed by Mr. Croft's anger, and realised that his old "form-room" manner was still very much alive. My companion then spoke, his face like thunder. "How dare you - I repeat, how dare you! two schoolboys indulging in such an unhealthy corrupt pastime! Cease smoking these, these cigarettes at once."

The elder of the two boys looked started for a moment, but seeing that it was a stranger who spoke, he quickly recovered his calm, rather insolent manner, and coolly replaced his cigarette in his mouth, but

though his younger companion looked half inclined to follow the elder boy's example, he looked rather ashamed, and sheepishly threw his half smoked cigarette away on to the shingle.

The boys were obviously from a high school, both had badges on their well cut blazers, and were well shod. The elder boy spoke then. "What's it got to do with you, you interfering old ass?" he said in a harsh rude tone. "You aren't our schoolmaster, so screw, big boy!" I stood spellbound; how Mr. Croft would take his insult, I dare not think. But suddenly Mr. Quelch's double, leapt forward, and seized the elder boy by the collar and shook him like a terrier shaking a rabbit. "Insolent, wretched boy -" he thundered. "How dare you, sir, address me like that!" The boy then yelled and wriggled like an eel, but the strength of Mr. Croft's arm was amazing, and the cigarette fell from the boy's mouth, and Mr. Croft ground it into the shingle with his foot.

Stepping back, panting, my companion turned to speak to the younger lad, who now looked rather terrified, but the elder boy grasped a stone and flung it at Mr. Croft's head viciously. Mr. Croft's keen eye, however, had noticed the action, and moving swiftly to one side, missed the stone by half an inch. Then, raising his stick, Mr. Croft fairly pulled the boy up from the rock, and that bright youth yelled at the top of his voice. "Loose, you old fool; loose, I tell you. My father will have you for assault if you dare to lay a finger on me."

Still grabbing the boy's arm, Mr. Croft paused: after all the boy was right, for having no authority to deliver a caning, much as the boy deserved drastic punishment, he would be on the wrong side of the law, now that the good old days when boys could be caned were past. The boy noticed this, and whilst much of his insolent manner had disappeared, he realised he held the trump card, and jumped back.

The younger boy then spoke in a quiet tone. "Look here, Bob," he said, "the gentleman is right, and you are a cad throwing a stone like that at him; anyway, I never really liked smoking, and after this I've done with you." This open-faced lad then turned and looked up at Mr. Croft, saying, "I'm sorry for my friend's rotten temper, sir, and I'll promise you that this is my last cigarette. With this remark he pulled a packet of ten from his pocket and hurled them far across the rocks.

Mr. Croft's face relaxed for a moment, and he patted the youngster on the back. "Well said, my boy, well said - I believe you, and good luck to your future at school - you may go." I smiled to myself at this remark; Mr. Croft seemed to fancy he was sending a boy from his study at Repton, and appeared forgetful of the fact that he was now a retired schoolmaster addressing a strange boy on the seashore.

Then the elder boy, left alone, rose as if to go, but a sudden gleam had come into Mr. Croft's eyes, and I noticed he was looking closely at the badge on the boy's blazer. "Weston High School," he barked suddenly at the boy, catching him by the arm again. "Is Colonel Wright a governor of your school, boy?" This question had a startling

effect on the lad; his face went suddenly white, and, losing all his air of arrogance, panted out: "Oh, yes, sir; but don't report me, please sir, don't, - he - he is my father."

Mr. Croft seemed taken aback, but rapped out at once, "You, a son of a fine man like your father, what would he say if he knew of your blackguardly conduct, unhappy boy?" Not waiting for a reply, my companion continued, "You dared to hurl a missile at me a moment ago, and I am strongly tempted to report you to Col. Wright - a man whom I have met in this town and highly respect, but take your choice, sir, bend over that rock, and I will endeavour to impress upon you the folly of such contemptible behaviour; or I shall certainly visit your father." The lad clenched his hands, but silently bent over a rock conveniently shaped by nature for such a purpose.

Mr. Croft then stepped back, and in grim silence his stick rose and fell on the boy's trousers, while I stood by and watched in silence. Mr. Croft lowered his stick at last, and rather breathlessly stepped back from the rock, giving the wretched youth a hard cold look.

Turning his now rather white face towards us, with a devilish look, Wright Jnr. limped away across the rocks, and we watched him vanish out of sight along the beach, where one or two wandering holiday makers had stared in wonder at the scene.

Mr. Croft then turned to me, and seemed suddenly aware of the fact that I was standing just behind him. "Bless my soul, Mr. Corbett," he said, "Pray pardon my ignoring your presence, but really, seeing that wretched boy smoking, especially one leading a minor astray, was really too much for me, but - ", Mr. Croft broke off and looked hard at me, for at that moment I could not suppress a smile for seeing, what to my mind was a naughty schoolboy having the "cosh", had a funny side after all. My friend seemed to read my thoughts, for his face broke into a crusty smile. "Oh, ah - of course," he said, "a typical episode from the "Magnet" enacted over again - well, Mr. Corbett, you certainly have seen "Mr. Quelch" wield the cane after all."

Well, after this exciting happening, we purchased tea and bread and butter from the neat white painted cafe at the side of the steps leading from the rocks, and I realised I had only half-an-hour to go before leaving Weston, and felt a little saddened by the fact that there was little chance of my seeing Mr. Croft again.

"You know, Mr. Croft," I said, "it seems a pity that things cannot always be the same. Look how the 'Magnet' met such an untimely end; this seemed to end an era of my life at least, and now you - a real live link with Mr. Richards and all he loves, you are leaving, too."

Mr. Croft looked very kindly at me then and spoke in a clear but quiet tone. "Yes, my boy, it does at first seem unkind of providence to alter things and place people apparently out of their accustomed ways of life, but was it not best for the 'Magnet', for example, to finish at

the height of its career, than to have, perhaps, waned into a decline? After all, it is much better for a thing we admire and esteem to terminate its career at a triumphant height, than to have an inglorious fading out for some unforeseen reason."

I could see the wisdom of these words, and it came home to me how a rocket soars grandly into the skies with triumphant colours and fire, but then what - the sparks and light just die away, and the ash falls to earth in anti-climax.

"And," resumed Mr. Croft, "the old order changeth giving place to new, which is, perhaps, better for us all, although it appears to us at the time a cruel twist of fate, my boy." I could only agree with this plain common sense way of viewing life, but time sped on, and leaving the cafe overlooking the sea, we strolled back towards the car park, where I espied my coach already waiting by the cafe wall. We stopped by the sea wall, and Mr. Croft looked hard at me as if to read my innermost thoughts.

"Well, Mr. Corbett, good-byes are not pleasant, but - I am more than glad to have met a 'Magnet' reader, and one who esteems the same things as myself; - in fact, I feel a deep regard for all the collectors, from Mr. Leckenby himself to everyone, and I am proud to have been Mr. Richards' model for the Remove Master - although at first I did not really approve." "Well, sir," I said, "the stories of 'Greyfriars' are nothing without their Mr. Quelch, and a finer character to guide and look after boys I do not think possible to imagine."

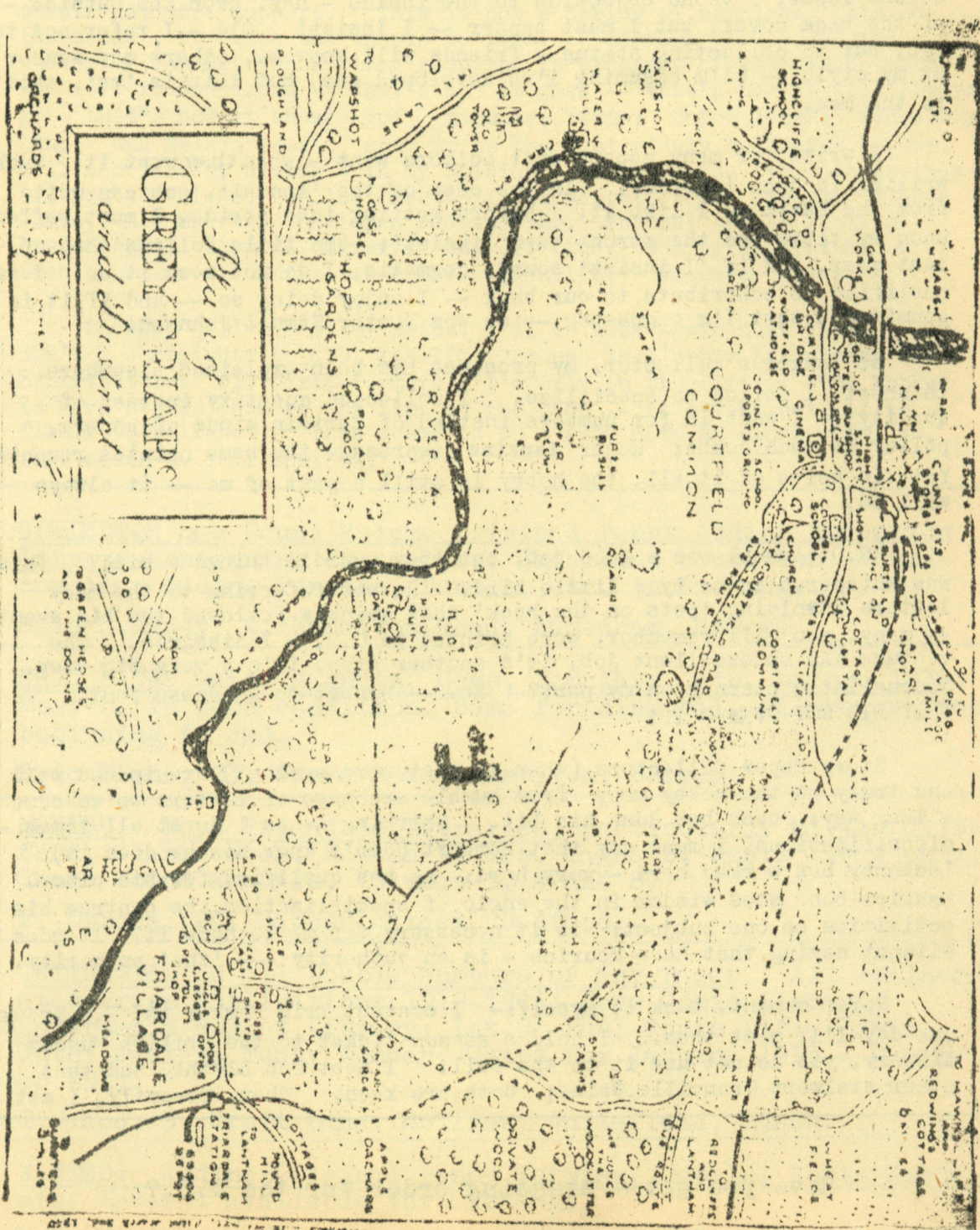
Mr. Croft's rather severe featured relaxed into a smile once again. "Thank you, my boy, for the sincerity which is conveyed to me, and I hope you will always think of me as a friend, and give my earnest regards to your fellow lovers of 'Greyfriars'." I promised I would do this, and after receiving Mr. Croft's gracious consent to put my day's experience on record for the "Digest Annual", we exchanged a strong handshake, and then I stepped across the road and boarded my coach.

After a few minutes all were aboard, and as the coach glided slowly out of the car park, I saw Mr. Quelch's double standing by the sea wall, his rather stern features seeming to be cast in bronze as the evening sun played across his face. There he stood, a real Mr. Quelch in every line of Mr. Chapman's drawings in the "Magnet". Then as the coach turned into a side street, he raised his hand in salute, and after a few seconds had vanished from sight.

Sitting by the fireside several hours later, I was telling Midge, my wife, of the wonderful day I had had. "Oh, well," she said, "I am ever so glad you met him again, John, but you don't look quite as jolly as you did when you left us this morning." I smiled, rather ruefully. "Well, no," I said, "but it is not very nice to think that there is little chance of seeing Mr. Croft again." Just then my son, Ian, came up to me and said, "But, daddy, you will read lots more about Mr. Quelch in

your 'Magnets', won't you?", and at this intelligent thought from my small son, I suddenly felt a glow of comfort, for how right he was after all.

"Well, come on, daddy," said Madge, "Ien is up specially late tonight for supper, so come along." With a feeling of contentment and cheer, we sat down, and what a supper it was.



The Hobby Again

By Reginald Cox

I appeared in the first Collectors' Digest Annual, but it was touch and go -- you see, my position was two pages from the end of this unique publication; however, I was 'in' -- I was satisfied. For the second issue, I've no objection to the inside -- nay, even the outside -- of the back cover, but I must appear -- I insist! Old -- I refer not to age, but to collecting status -- friends will know me, others may wonder at my style -- (I'm assuming I've developed one) but this is 'me', this is the man.

I write for many papers what editors want -- when they want it; such writing is done to order. In the case of the 'Annual', one can write from the heart -- I like it. Before getting into stride, I must reflect upon my title and the strong term 'insist'; the title follows that of last year, and if 'I insist' sounds dogmatic, I do not mean it so. I am qualified to contribute to our book -- I enjoy doing so -- and if it is considered that I'm a gas-bag -- so was Doctor Samuel Johnson!

No longer a collector, my presence has been explained elsewhere, in short, I failed to specialize. I collected quantity instead of quality -- I went in for numbers instead of certain kinds of papers, a policy of much doubt; Roger Jenkins expressed the same opinion recently. Yet, in spite of it all, the hobby is still a part of me -- it always will be.

"C.D. Annual was a good job, but they overdid things a bit!" This was whispered to me by a little bird. He was referring to the many letters involving 'pats on the back' that quickly followed the big event -- many, you will remember, were printed in C.D. I disagree. The venture WAS an excellent job, it's another step, it's a very big step. Journalistic blarney on my part? No. -- honest-to-goodness fact. THEY DID NOT OVERDO IT!

Story Paper Collectors (when is that word coming?) are indeed well and truly on the hobby map; from humble exchange of letters we've come a long way; each has done his bit. Shirking -- as I do at all times -- classifications, I must say that Herbert (don't know how he does it) Leckenby has worked hard -- very hard; he has qualified for his place. Maurice Bond sees wisdom in the angle of specialization, he centres his activities on one subject; is it necessary for me to name it? It goes without saying that he -- Maurice -- is an authority -- 'the' authority.

For a moment, back to myself:-- I contact Eric Parker and E.S. Brooks, one day I'll meet them. I hold a season ticket to the British Museum Library, yet do not use it to the full. I meet Bob Blythe, and that other stalwart Grenville Waive; both are keen. Then, recently, I met

Have you got a standing order for the C.D.?

'unearthing specialist' Bill Martin; it is not for me to provide him with a free advert here, I'll be brief -- he's doing a good job. The newly formed London Branch are holding congenial meetings, it's nice to see it -- why, even the ladies join in! The 'S.P.C.' continues to speak for itself. -- it gives me pleasure to add that members of Britain's Amateur Printers Association have expressed high opinions of Mr. Gander's work. The Collectors' Miscellany is another sticker, it has a wonderful record. Hobbyist caters for most of the collecting hobbies -- it should get more support. This is not a string of careless 'pats-on-the-backs', it helps the wheels to turn; a mention of C.D. to the editor of the British Mailbag resulted in exchange of letters between the editors concerned -- that's how it goes -- that's how it will always go -- that's how it should go! Magnets; Gems; Union Jacks; Schoolboys Owns; and Nelson Lees'; seem to be the most widely collected papers. I'll conclude by naming -- in my opinion -- a few of the 'where-have-they-all-got-to' class. Pals; Football Favourite; Boys' Cinema; Kinema Comic; All Sports; Children's Newspaper; Scoops; Fun & Fiction; Dreadnought; Diamond Library; Schoolfriend; Wonderland Tales; -- even the dear old Marvel is not too plentiful? Remember all these?

Enough. I've said my piece, I'll be back again next year. Why don't I contribute to C.D. itself? Because that paper has plenty of contributors; all sixth-formers -- I'm only in the fifth. 'The Hobby' is more stable than at any time in the past -- it wavers not, it is firmly established. This seems to be a good note to close with, so, once again -- I'll shut up.

COLLECTOR has Bound Volume Original Penny Aldine Invention Library containing 28 numbers. Excellent condition. Would consider Aldine Turpins, Duvals, etc. in Exchange.

Eric R. Landy, 4, Nunceaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

ERIC FAYNE wants Magnets, Gems, Populars, etc. before 1930. Must be in good condition. Some for disposal, all years from beginning to end.

Eric Fayne, 23, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

WANTED: Boys Friend 3d Libraries, particularly Martin Clifford, Clarke Hook, Sexton Blakes, Magnets, Nos. 1 and 2 only; Chums bound Annuals, Volumes 3, 4 and 8.

F. Osborn, 24, Harpur Street, Bedford.

INTERESTED IN all Double Numbers of any Paper. All Amalgamated Press Publications 1919-1924; Boys Comic Library; Henderson's Nugget Library; Lot O' Fun; Comic Life; Comic Cuts; Jester; Funny Wonder; Chips for January 1913 - December 1915.

T. Waine, 3, Croft Lane, Hollins, Whitefield, Lancs.

WANTED: Aldine Original Penny Turpins, Duvals, Robin Hoods, etc. Several available for Exchange.

E.R. Landy, 4, Nunceaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

Girls in the Lime Light

Recollections of Cliff House and Morcove Stories

By Gordon Kirby

Fans of Billy Bunter and Greyfriars will be aware that Mr. Charles Hamilton created another Bunter, a feminine counter-part of the redoubtable Billy, and another school, Cliff House, whose scholars on occasion appeared in the pages of the "Magnet". But were they aware that Mr. Hamilton's creations have the claim to fame that they became known as "the most famous schoolgirls on earth".

Mr. Hamilton wrote these stories under the name of Hilda Richards, the name under which his stories of "Headland House" and "Saint Olive's" now appear. It is interesting to see how the schoolgirl equivalents of the Greyfriars boys came into being, and their subsequent careers.

Not that the characters were exact duplicates, far from it. Mr. Hamilton is far too much of a creative writer to take such an easy way out. Also, since other authors took over the stories, the characters naturally changed. It will perhaps come as a surprise to many to find that some of the closest parallels to his characters in schoolgirl fiction were the creations of other writers - all of whom were men.

The first Hilda Richards tale was entitled "The Girls of Cliff House School" and was published in the first issue of the "School Friend" dated May 17/1919. The Amalgamated Press published five more of these stories from the pen of Mr. Hamilton, when he was replaced by another author so that he could concentrate on Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

The characters he created were modified over the years until they became minor masterpieces of schoolgirl psychological observations. Though Mr. Hamilton continued to use them in Greyfriars stories, his own schoolboy characters did not appear in the Cliff House stories - new boys' schools were created, and Jack Tolhurst & Co. and Jimmy Richmond and Co. later, were the equivalents of the famous "Magnet" chums.

Cliff House was situated in Kent, and a "Magnet" reader instantly feels at home when he reads of Friardale, Courtfield, Pegg and the River Sark. Names such as Clara Trevlyn, Phyllis Howell, Marjorie Hazeldene, and, of course, Bessie Bunter, are at once familiar too, from their appearances in the "Magnet".

Probably the best of the new "Hilda Richards" was a man who wrote as "Ida Melbourne". He had a great flair for incident and humour, and a simple but vivid style which has stood the test of time and the critical attitude of grown-ups remarkably well.

He wrote for the "School Friend", his last works on Cliff House (as far as I know) were two yarns which appeared in the new paper "The Schoolgirl" at the end of 1930 and 1931.

When Cliff House next appeared a new author had taken over and somewhat remodelled the school. This gentleman, who edited a schoolgirl paper for a time, had a similar gripping, though unadorned, prose style, and had a remarkable fund of plot invention, and a knowledge of such exotic matters as Egypt, pleasure cruises, film studios, etc., that was astounding. His detailed accounts of hockey matches, swimming carnivals, and other matters dear to the schoolgirl heart, were also very clear and believable.

Yet though Cliff House and its Elizabeth Gertrude Bunter, the nearest parallels to Greyfriars lads were the inventions of a "Marjorie Stanton" who also wrote as "Joy Phillips". Stories by this author appeared in every issue of the "Schoolgirl's Own" from No. 1 (1920) to the last issue about 1937 - which is a very fair record. They then continued in "The Schoolgirl" for another year or so.

"Marjorie Stanton's" style was very distinctive and might have been imitated with a little skill; he also had a son - who may have written as "Joy Phillips" - so I am unable to say whether he wrote all the stories himself. The Amalgamated Press never stressed any connection between "Marjorie Stanton" and "Ida Melbourne" (or "Hilda Richards"), yet they collaborated on a play which brought their characters together, for the only time, I imagine; it was entitled "The Biters Bit". "Marjorie Stanton" had a great talent for the more emotional side of schoolgirl life, and could convey an impression of anxiety and melancholy better than any other author I have ever read. He could also describe two styles of life, poor and wealthy, with acute use of detail, which he employed with masterly economy to "set the stage", as it were.

His stories of the struggles of the heroine "Betty Barton" to overcome the snobbery of her fellow-pupils at Morcove (arising from the fact that Betty was a poor little mill-girl, so popular in 1920 fiction), would seem incongruous in 1947, yet with very little skilled editing and re-writing, should appeal very much to the schoolgirl of to-day.

Lest all the foregoing should seem out of place in a magazine devoted to the interests of collectors of boys' papers, I must justify it as far as I may by giving some details of the characters who are the schoolgirl equivalents of your Greyfriars favourites, or, at least, better known personalities.

First and foremost of these, naturally, is Billy Bunter's equally rotund, equally famous sister Elizabeth Gertrude, better known as Bessie. Bessie Bunter in the first Cliff House stories was very much a Bunter, fat, fatuous, greedy, inclined to dishonesty, perpetually seeking a loan on the strength of her expected postal order. She was not over scrupulous about her appearance, and was a colossal prevaricator. She shared with her brother a stammer, a huge appetite and a talent for ventriloquism.

As the years progressed, however, Bessie became more and more human and lovable, till she was referred to as "the beloved duffer". In several stories she showed herself capable of extraordinary generosity and selflessness. But she never lost her appetite, her girth and her incredible opinion of her own charms.

No equivalent of Hurree Janset Ram Singh can be found at Cliff House, but at Morcove was the dusky Naomer, Her Serene Highness Queen of Nakare (a rather more than usual mythical kingdom of Africa). With a far from Royal dignity, Naomer "scampered" round Morcove making life a misery for Paula Creel, whose protesting "Aow - Bai Jove Naomer" was a standing joke.

Paula was partly the feminine equivalent of the "lovable D'Arcy". The other character, oddly enough, was also a "Marjorie Stanton" invention, taken over by "Hilda Richards". Where Paula Creel spoke with D'Arcy's aristocratic lisp, and was the fashion plate of Morcove (when about 1927, Paula shingled her blond hair, schoolgirls the world over knew that the fashion had really arrived) Jemima Carstairs was slim, be-monocled and Eton-cropped with D'Arcy's fondness for a really good tailor.

Jemima, however, was as intelligent as Paula was slow - her speech was witty, adroit, and based, one would conjecture, on Edger Wallace's "Bones of the River". (Her father, an ex-Secret Serviceman, was a commissioner in Nigeria, among other things).

Even Vernon-Smith had his counterparts. In the first Cliff House series there were Helen Stone and Augusta Anstruther-Browne (whose nominal resemblance to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not evident in her behaviour), and in the second Rosa Rodworth and Diana Royston-Clarke, and at Morcove Cora Grandways. These girls were all rebels, sophisticates, and iconoclasts, but like Vernon Smith could be loyal, courageous and honest.

Cora was perhaps the most consistent villainess in all schoolgirl fiction. Yet she had at least the redeeming feature, that when she sinned, it was on the grand scale. The most unpleasant schoolgirl of all, however, was undoubtedly Ursula Wade; a girl not only plain and dowdy, but as unattractive morally as she was physically. One parallel was the similarity between Leila Carroll, at Cliffe House, and Fisher T. Fish. Leila when she first came to Cliff House, spoke very broad American, and being the daughter of a film producer, had quite a social standing... but later evolved into a very anglicised schoolgirl whose only Americanism was the use of the word "sure".

It seems to this writer that the concentration on Schoolboy Papers has led to a neglect by collectors of their sister papers (or is it that collectors are chiefly men?). In consequence the present day collector is under great handicap. Any collector who has information on the subjects (or any of the publications mentioned above) would be doing me a great favour if he were to get in touch with me through Mr. Leckenby. (I hope the Editor won't consider this too glaring a free advertisement). Later, if this article does not stir up a storm of protest, I hope, perhaps, to be able to supply further facts on the feminine counterparts of the boys of Greyfriars School.

NOTE Since writing this article, I have received permission from the last author who wrote Cliff House stories, to use his name, which is John W. Wheway; readers of the early "Champion" will, no doubt, remember his sports stories. He still writes numerous serials and one can only hope, for the sake of the present generation of schoolgirls, that he will one day write again of Marjorie Hazeldene & Co.

Topicality was the Keynote

By H. M. Bond.

That well remembered weekly budget of Sexton Blake fare, "The Union Jack", created quite a number of records during its long life. It presented an unsurpassed variety of stories from 1894 to 1933 and employed some of the finest artists ever to illustrate a weekly paper. Its range of serials was most impressive, as I related in a special feature of last year's Annual, and the authors writing both these and the full length stories were of the highest order. One could never grumble and say - "This paper is getting a bit of a bore," or "The stories are all the same" - as might be imagined considering that for the biggest part of its life the U.J. gave us nothing but detective stories and these all featuring the same detective, Sexton Blake. No, one could always pick up the paper and remark - "Hm - this is up-to-date and no mistake". Topicality was certainly the keynote in the U.J. stories, in fact, in some cases, topicality gave place to prophesy and these peeps into the future were not as fantastic as we then believed. We can see that now in retrospect. From about 1903 onwards the paper presented it's readers with as topical a selection of yarns as one could wish for. No matter what was afoot in this country, or in the Empire and even in foreign countries, it was not long before our favourite sleuth was taking part in it. When the famous suffragettes were astounding the world with their deeds, Blake was on the spot. When the 1914 war broke out the Man from Baker Street was very active and his patriotism carried him into many a hazardous situation. And let it be said here that young Tinker was not far away. And so it was through the years. Every important item in our National programme of events was faithfully recorded by one or other of the immortal band of authors devoting their energies to the Blake saga, and readers were given a part fiction - part fact story that always proved to be a "scoop" for the old paper. For the purpose of this feature I have taken the years from 1923 to 1933 during which period numbers 1000 to 1531 of "The Union Jack" were published, a most eventful series of years as you will agree. Let me then take you on a review of ten or more years of Sexton Blake history and show you how "topicality was the keynote" of the paper with the longest run.

By the time the famous "Detective Supplement" had reached its thirty-second instalment it was time for "The Union Jack" to celebrate its thousandth number. The Supplement was a fine feature for such a weekly and it offered readers some really invaluable information on crime in general. Amongst other fascinating articles it told us of "The Gentle Art of the Con Man", "Ciphers and Secret Writing", "Exploits of the Flying Squad", "The Inside Story of Sing-Sing" etc. etc. All these items were of topical interest in 1923, in fact the Detective Supplement kept the reader of Sexton Blake right up to date in criminal matters and very often one of its leading features had a direct bearing on the Blake story of that particular week. But the Supplement is not really the subject of this feature. Our idea is to accompany Blake on cases of immediate interest.

Christmas time always brought us Blake stories of a most reasonable nature. U.J. No. 1002 "The Case of the Prodigal Father" was the fore-runner of some score of Yuletide yarns between 1922 and 1933. No. 1016 gave us a grand yarn about the then prevalent illicit diamond racket in South Africa. It was called "The Brand of the T.D.B." and featured that famous character Mademoiselle Yvonne, indicating that the hand of George Hamilton Teed was behind it all. Teed, perhaps more than any of the other "old brigade" of S.B. authors, was responsible for many an up-to-date yarn. We hear from him again in No. 1020 with "The Mystery of the Moving Mountain" which was based on an actual attempt to steal a consignment of gold bullion in Costa Rica. Seven weeks later, in No. 1027, we were treated to a most up-to-date story dealing with the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy with Tinker playing a leading part, in fact, he was a participant in the T.T. races for the year was entitled "The Case of Tinker's Tourist Trophy". The very next issue showed Blake's young assistant in a new guise:- "Tinker - Wireless Operator". Remember that Radio was all the rage, the sensation of all time, in 1923. Yes, a MOST topical story this, and so was the next one in No. 1029, "The Battle of Brooklands" or: Sexton Blake, Racing Motorist. This time the detective himself was doing the speeding, and it was just at the time when Brooklands was in the news!

The U.J. serials offered topical fare too, for in No. 1038 commenced a story by Frank B. Spickard about the notorious American railway crooks, "The Wire Devils". But No. 1041 was brilliantly topical. Teed again, this time with his famous "adopted" character George Marsden Plummer, the latter taking an active part in the 1923 rising of Abdel Krim in Morocco. And, not surprisingly, Teed evolved an ingenious series of stories dealing with Plummer as Abdel Krim's first in command. As Sakr-el-Droog the master criminal headed the Riffian Mission to London.

One of the main headlines in the newspapers in 1923 was the series of revolutions in the small South American states. Teed once again grasped the opportunity to put over a story about a part of the globe he knew so well, and thus we had "Huxton Rymer - President" in No. 1047. No need to emphasise the position here - the famous surgeon crook in yet another daring escapade. Another famous Teed character was featured in a topical yarn dealing with illicit emerald buying in the then dangerous Panama country - Marie Galante, high priestess of Wooddoism. No. 1050 "The Case of the Six Rubber Balls". Christmas 1923 brought us Waldo the Wonder Man in "The Flaming Spectre of Cloome", a title which almost explains itself. A few weeks passed, during which many stories of an up-to-date character appeared, then we returned to Huxton Rymer who this time experiences the horrors of the disastrous earthquake in Japan in 1923, when the Southern Island was very badly affected. Then along came the 1929 Wembley Cup Final which was the central theme of "The Panic Maker" in No. 1072. Topical to the last degree was this one. From Wembley we hopped across "the big pond" in No. 1074 where Blake had a go at smashing a rather stiff proposition, the graft system. Back again at Wembley in No. 1078 after a successful Yankee trip, this time the famous exhibition of 1924 was featured. The story: "The Great Wembley Mystery". The Olympic games in Paris came into another story about this time, No. 1089 in fact, entitled "The Case of the Missing Athlete". Even November fogs came into the Blake "field" as was exemplified in No. 1102, "The Fog Fiends" which incidentally appeared on the bookstalls in November 1924. Christmas comes around again and in

December of the same year we read about "Sexton Blake's Christmas Truce", a yarn that simply exuded the Yuletide spirit of goodwill. In No. 1111 the science of Astrology came to the fore in "The House of the Horoscope" which was linked up with a factual article on the subject in the Detective Supplement of that issue, by the same author. In No. 1118 E. S. Brooks gave us Waldo in yet another "yarn of the moment". "The Affair of the Roman Relics", for the discovery of various relics was much in the news at the time. No. 1129 "The Man Who Won The Calcutta" struck a very original note dealing with the scheming of Huxton Rymer to "lift" the spoils from a successful sweepstake winner. The following week another topical story called "The Case of the Wandering Jew" appeared. It was an excellent portrait of Jerusalem by Gwyn Evans (who knew Palestine intimately). The World Heavyweight Boxing Championship came to the fore in No. 1135 once again with the redoubtable Waldo in the limelight. An important story appeared in No. 1157, "The Mystery of Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Pudding", the first of the superb series of Gwyn Evans' Christmas yarns which proved to be the most topical and seasonable ever to appear in the Old Paper. Even now, after 23 years, this story is fresh and topical. It is one of MY Christmas treats EVERY YEAR.

The Darwin theory and the much sought after "missing link" provided the theme for No. 1167 "The Case of the Missing Link" which was soon followed by the first real American gangster yarn "The Adventure of the Bowery Tar-Baby" (No. 1170). This story was one with authentic background and most up-to-date at the time. Once again the Cup Final comes to the fore - this time the 1926 version in No. 1176 "Twixt Cup and Law" and, a little while later came No. 1190 with another turn for the famous Brooklands car racing track to be "in the news". The result: "The Spectre of the Speedway". A really unique story was "The Secret of Shakespeare's Skull" by Gwyn Evans in No. 1192, featuring Ruff Hanson, his breezy American detective. The story was based on actual fact and Mr. Evans explained all about it in the Supplement of the same issue. A sequel to the above story appeared in the next issue.

Coal mines, strikes and Trade Unions, so very much in the news in 1926, provided the material for "The Case of the Kirkton Coal King" in No. 1197, and then soon came the second Gwyn Evans Christmas treat, "Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Eve" and it WAS a treat too. One of the great attractions of these Yuletide stories was the superb illustrations by the popular Eric R. Parker to whom we are indebted for the modern conception of Sexton Blake. Truly No. 1210 was and still is an issue to keep and cherish. That air of topicality so apparent in the Union Jack was even more so from No. 1116 onwards, for now each issue contained an instalment of the now well remembered "Tinker's Note-Book" in which Blake's assistant discussed current events and often gave us the real life stories behind the fictional ones. A case in point was that most topical yarn of the Grand National in No. 1223 "The Puzzle of the Blue Ensign" in which the horse "Blue Ensign" won the race after a sensational jump in which it cleared both the fence and another horse at Bechers Brook. Tinker told us in his notebook of that issue that this had actually happened in 1912. The famous horse "Jerry M" was the animal in question. We were even treated to a picture of "Jerry M".

Immediately after the "Blue Ensign" story came that never-to-be-forgotten Chinese Civil War series by G. H. Teed in issues No's 1223 to 1226. 1927 was a year of struggle in the "flowery land" and Blake and Tinker played a very potent part in the events there. These stories were probably Teed's finest work. The author's foresight was amazing, as can be judged after 22 years. No. 1232 gave us yet another racing yarn - this time it was "The Derby" that was the topic in "The Case of the Disqualified Derby".

Probably the biggest event of 1927 was the total eclipse of the sun by the moon on June 29th, and this rare spectacle was made the subject of issue No. 1237 in a yarn entitled "Eclipse". Once again Tinker gave us some "inside information" in his notebook. Gwyn Evans was the author and once again Ruff Hanson and "Splash" Page were "in the news".

Next sporting event? You'll never guess. It was the Cowes Regatta. Yes, this famous event was the background of issue No. 1241 "The Great Yachting Week Mystery" and a fine effort it was too. And then came another horse race! This time it was the Cambridgeshire. The story: "The Norman Duke Mystery" (No. 1253). The third of the Gwyn Evans Christmas stories appeared in No. 1260 "The Affair of the Black Carol". E. R. Parker excelled himself here!

Rex Hardinge's first Sexton Blake story "The Black Cloud" (No. 1265) is worth a mention at this point, for, although the subject was not exactly topical it was unusual, for it dealt with the citrus estates of the Transvaal. When it was not topical the U.J. was usually unusual! Some of the non-topical 1928 stories dealt with subjects which were well known. No. 1272, for instance, covered the scene of the Chelsea artists, while other stories referred to textiles, mining, etc. No. 1276 brought up the disastrous Mississippi flood of 1928 - "The Mississippi Mystery" and then came a series that almost certainly were based on H.G. Wells material - they introduced "the mysterious Mr. Mist" who had the power to make himself invisible. One of this series "The Great Budget Conspiracy" was right up-to-the-minute and so was its sequel "The Mystery of the Missing Mine". Readers can imagine the havoc an invisible crook could play in affairs of national importance. These stories were really top-liners and once again it was the genius of Gwyn Evans behind them.

In 1928 the flying of the Atlantic was headline news and the U.J. came along with "Freud" (No. 1283) which told of an attempt to obtain a forty thousand pound prize for an east to west crossing by false pretences. "The Bandit of the Bank" in No. 1295 dealt with the looting of the Bank of England. Krock Kelk was the criminal involved here, but he was rivalled in a couple of weeks by Paul Cynos in "A Million in Gold" (No. 1297). Not much later, in fact in No. 1299, came another sensational theft! This time Zenith the Albino "lifted" the Great Seal of England. The well known Oscar Slater case became an S.B. affair in No. 1301, "The Man on the Stairs", but of course Slater's name was altered as were those of the other people in the case. It became, in fact, the Otto Slade case. The next really topical story was "Sexton Blake - Lord Mayor" which was based on the famous show, an annual occasion in London and other places (No. 1308). Christmas 1928 saw yet another fine yarn from Gwyn Evans entitled "The Crime of the Christmas Tree" which was based on a strange occurrence. A man killed by an icicle! It was followed by an equally seasonable story "The Mystery of the Sipping Vampire."

And we come again with old Roman relics in No. 1334 "The Mosaic Mystery" followed by the Police Centenary story "One Hundred Years After" which fitted into the picture perfectly in many ways. See No. 1336. The next week in 1337 it was the turn of the General Election (No. 1337). "Exposure", another of Gwyn Evans brilliant efforts, was the name of the story and Ruff Hanson "fresh" it stated "from the battleground ballots" of Chicago. No. 1347 revolved around the Boy Scouts World Jamboree of 1929 "The Jamboree Mystery".

"The Mistletoe Milk Mystery" was the 1929 Christmas story of Gwyn Evans, just as seasonable as ever. It had a sequel the following week.

The next year, 1930, was notable for its failure to offer anything topical, unless one could call gangsterism as in that category. There were various gangster stories all more or less based on the lawlessness that was rife in the U.S.A. in the 1920's. The year finished on a topical note with "The Man Who Hated Christmas", another Gwyn Evans story of seasonable touch.

1931 was another year of bootleggers, racketeers, gangsters and all the rest of it. To be sure the U.J. was topical in regard to this sort of thing, but it was inclined to be too much of a good thing and I, for one, was pleased to see the end of the "reign of terror" and of the cycle of such stories. Even the end of this year was not brightened, for the usual Gwyn Evans Christmas story was missing owing to the author being indisposed, but Wm. J. Elliott took over admirably, although not with the same gusto as Evans. His story was "The Phantom of the Pantomime."

The Chino-Manchurian war was the highlight of 1932 as far as topical U.J. yarns were concerned - of course it was Teed who presented us with vivid scenes of war-torn China, and the result was absorbing to say the least. Three stories covered this subject in No's 1494 to 1497. Later we had a new topic, it was the Motor Show at Olympia covered by a good story by a newcomer to U.J. pages, one Stawford Webber. "The Motor Show Mystery" was in No. 1514. It was closely followed by "The War Memorial Murders" which story in No. 1517 dated 12/11/32 was really topical.

No. 1521 was an issue almost as important as the last number of the U.J. (not so far off now as 1933 came near). It was the last Gwyn Evans Christmas No. The story "The Masked Carollers" was not up to his old standard, but it lacked nothing in atmosphere and topicality. C. Malcolm Hincks gave us another Christmas yarn in No. 1522 "The Secret Passage Murder" and, for the first time we had yet another story of Christmas time entitled "The Crimson Smile" by Donald Stuart, now so well known as Gerald Verner.

Those three Christmas yarns were the last topical ones to appear in the dear old U.J. and it is with a sigh that I pick up No. 1551 dated 18th February 1933. Although over 15 years have passed since that issue was published, I still MISS the Old Paper. It was never equalled in the history of Old Boys' Papers and its successor "Detective Weekly", although topical to a certain extent, never reached the heights of the "old 'un". Every week of every year since 1933 I have been reminded of some U.J. story by an actual occurrence. At Christmas I automatically think of Gwyn Evans and his unsurpassable Christmas stories. Most of the big events of the year all bring back U.J. stories to the mind. Even to-day the owner of a collection of topical S.B. stories can always pick up something that has a direct bearing on life today.

It is topicality that helped the old U.J. to success and personally I think that most of the stories could be read avidly to-day.

I Travelled for the St. Frank's League

By James W. Cook

My first introduction to The Nelson Lee Library came from a school fellow round about 1917. He handed it to me in the class-room for no other reason than that either he had finished with it and wanted to dispose of it, or he did not want the teacher to know he read such cheap literature. But by that one act of his he made me his life-long friend because I had found something entirely out of the ordinary run of boys' books. There was that something about the stories that made you look forward to the next issue. I have often wanted to know what that first story was, but it has become lost in the space of years. There was a war on then too, and our particular district had been receiving pointed attention from aircraft nearly every night. It was in 1917 that my school was bombed in daylight, causing the death of eighteen children.

I shall be intimate myself and state that I lived in an area so beloved by writers of fiction and publicised all too fully. I knew Chinatown more than I knew London, and I often had a laugh when someone would write about the East-End of London and give it a fancy atmosphere.

That is where Edwy Searles Brooks scored. He knew his Chinatown, he portrayed his crooks and his characters from that vicinity to perfection. His description of the water-side never went astray. I know because I lived there.

But it was so nice to read about St. Frank's, and if there were strange happenings each week at the school, after all, it was only a story.

I managed to get several others interested in the "Lee", and although I saved a lot of the books, I gave many away.

Time went on till the introduction of the St. Frank's League. A little before this I had won a prize in a competition which ran in the Nelson Lee for naming the characters correctly in a puzzle story. The winners were so numerous that the prizes had to be changed to penknives! I wonder if any reader of the C.D. has an old penknife with "Nelson Lee Library" inscribed on the blade?

When the "St. Frank's League" began I at once became Organising Officer and worked hard introducing very many new readers. This earned me a bronze medal and a silver one.

Then there was the Pen-Pals section which brought me letters from all over the world. I was surprised that the N.L.L. reached such out-of-the-way places like Fiji, Somoa, Falkland Islands, Hong Kong etc. These letters began to accumulate, so that one morning I burnt over three thousand for want of room!

I ran no fewer than four correspondence clubs and made many trips all over England to visit these correspondents. Now I have only one left to whom I still write. Perhaps there may be one or two who are reading the Collector's Digest whom I know from those days, if so, I would like to hear from them. Yet, what names I have already seen in the magazine do not bring any recollection of the old days. It was always an adventure meeting correspondents because we both had to identify ourselves and to do this many were the devices we got up to. One time it would be a certain flower worn, another it would be by holding a "Nelson Lee" or by describing one's clothes. Other times it was quite easy by just going to the house where the pen friend lived and being announced. But it was not always as easy as that because a lot of the meetings were surreptitious, why I do not know, except perhaps that Nelson Lee was taboo to a number of sons and daughters. However, we always got over it, and in most cases we just continued to write to each other.

But not all. Some of those I corresponded with were girls, and it was these who were a bit difficult in that we had to meet in clandestine moments. I can't imagine these moments today - not in these hard-boiled times! One enterprising young lady wrote and asked me to her place for no other reason - I found out later - than to make her boy friend jealous! He was, too, because she wrote and told me afterwards that their quarrel had now been patched up.

Still, it was to talk about the St. Frank's League and the St. Frank's stories that made these visits their primary concern, and I enjoyed them very much. I remember a girl who asked me to go and visit her at an hotel. She was over from Germany and she had sent me a wire from Zurich. She was a very keen reader and I believe she did a lot to get new readers in Germany. At that particular time I was learning German and she was a great help. She stayed at the hotel some considerable time and we met often. But she was typically Teutonic. She denounced a fellow at the hotel as a spy because he wore glasses he didn't need! She maintained that he wore them for the reason that he was able to see behind him by the aid of the reflection in the glass. Because she was once attacked in the Black Forest she invariably had a wicked-looking knife in her bag. After a time I found that our conversation would drift away from its main theme and she was getting ideas about romance.

It was a bit of a job getting rid of her, but she finally went back to her country as far as I knew. I have often wondered about her because the hotel she stayed at was singled out apparently by a bomb during the first air raids on this country in 1940.

I once went to meet somebody in St. Albans and they didn't turn up. Deciding to go to his house in case he missed me, I found that his father was an undertaker and I am ashamed to say I came away immediately and returned home.

Another one at Southampton wanted me to take him over the Fleetway House and Gray's Inn Road, and then when I had shown him that to give him a conducted tour over the village of Ballton and Bannington!

Advertise in the C.D.

The first was easy, but it was hard persuading him there was no such place as St. Frank's. The nearest I have got to the St. Frank's "area" is Seaford in Sussex. Almost all my friends who visited me in London wanted to see Gray's Inn Road, the "home" of Nelson Lee. I wonder whether Baker Street has the same attraction for Sexton Blake fans? I believe that the St. Frank's League, if it had continued, would have come to something big because it was world wide and all its members had a basic hobby, but somehow it began to fall flat. It may be that there was insufficient support from the Amalgamated Press, and towards 1932 even the Nelson Lee exhibited signs of a don't care attitude in the presentation of its stories.

I have a dim recollection of being told a new editor was pursuing a new policy. Old stories were being re-issued, but somehow they did not go over as they did when they were first published. In my efforts to promote the sale of the N.L.L. I used to leave them in buses, trams and trains. I wonder if I collected any new readers that way?

I had an idea once that a statuette of the famous detective would sell like hot cakes if the Amalgamated Press would sell them. They were quite willing to do this if there had been the support. But somehow, although I got hundreds of readers to write in their promise to buy one, I never heard any more of it. Soon afterwards a statuette of Sexton Blake appeared at 3/6 each.

Another time I went to a lot of trouble in trying to get the adventures of the St. Frank's juniors in the Children's Hour at the B.B.C. I got in touch with Mr. Brooks first as Broadcasting House had requested I send in a specimen story. The series I sent were one advised by the author, but I did not think they would be acceptable. They were not. Mr. Brooks wanted the "Smale Fox" series, and I had suggested the "South Sea" (1922) series. Readers may remember the stories that dealt with Mr. Smale Fox at St. Frank's, where a housemaster had a twin brother who at times masqueraded as a master. While the South Seas yarns were full of excitement, cannibals, Chinamen, earthquakes, etc. I am sure the latter series would have put even Dick Barton in the shade.

However, I am still enjoying my further adventures with Nelson Lee and my earnest hope is that one day it will make a re-appearance. I fear that the stories would be a lot different as we knew them because I can imagine Handforth arguing over his sweet coupons and Fatty Little eating somebody else's rations.

In a letter recently from the Principal of the Amalgamated Press the writer expressed the hope of "reviving those grand stories", but not at present owing to the paper shortage.

ONE STORY, TWO PUBLISHERS: (Contd. from Page 46)†

Than it appeared in their 3d. Boys Own Library, finally it turned up in the Amalgamated Press (Harmsworth's) Boys Realm Football and Sports Library (½d) with the title changed to "King of the Ring" and very much abridged. It would appear Henry T. Johnson was rather more business-like than some of his fellow authors.

Dr. Ferraro and his Creator

By Rex Dolphin

He wrote something like a hundred Sexton Blake stories, yet he is rarely mentioned in "Blakians" and certainly has never been singled out for any special praise. As he is one of my favourite authors I'm asking him here to take a bow. Gentlemen -- Coutt's Brisbane!

An author is known by the characters he creates; a Sexton Blake author is known by his secondary characters. In the case of Coutt's Brisbane this means Dr. Ferraro.

Ferraro is one of the great "sportsmen" among anti-Blake criminals. (The others are Zenith, Weldo and Huxton Rymer). He first appeared in "The Sexton Blake Library" No. 185 (First Series 1915-1925) "The Men Who Forgot". Here he is shown as an old enemy of Blake's, the detective having smashed his organisation on their last encounter. Presumably this statement is to give Ferraro some background, as no previous Ferraro story is known. A distinguished scientist and surgeon of Italian origin, Ferraro was for years head of the Camorra and master of an organisation of criminals with branches nearly all over the world. He was a man who, like Huxton Rymer, could have won fame in the legitimate scientific world - instead he preferred to pit his wits against society.

Like Leon Kastrel, Ferraro is rarely seen as himself - he is a master of disguise. We can usually be sure, when in Brisbane's stories we come across a benevolent old professor or kindly whitehaired doctor, that behind the disguise is our old friend Ferraro. He has even been known to impersonate Blake himself with great success. When he is himself he is tallish, heavily built, middle-aged, with black hair turning slightly grey, a dark complexion and a sardonic smile. He has been known both clean shaven and with a small pointed beard. He keeps himself in perfect physical and mental condition. His manner is sarcastic, elegantly charming, or brusque, according to the situation.

In the early stories he is described as evil and diabolical, and indeed he killed and maimed without compunction. He was always setting ingenious but gruesome booby-traps for his victims, Blake included. All this, no doubt, was the result of his "Camorra" training, plus his inventive scientific mind.

Ferraro mellows as time goes on, and while there is always the cheerful, casual sort of pot-shooting with rifles and pistols that goes on in these yarns, no one gets seriously hurt, and the whole thing is treated as a sort of schoolboy game. A genuine respect develops between Ferraro on the one hand and Blake and Tinker on the other, and occasionally we find them calling a truce and acting as allies.

The Doctor controls a nebulous sort of organisation, of which only he knows the composition. He has no regular lieutenants, and the personnel varies from story to story. He exercises an iron discipline over them and will not accept any excuse for failure.

His schemes are usually very big, and involve such things as diamonds, gold, platinum, estates and scientific inventions. All his powers of persuasion, scientific knowledge, ruthlessness and hypnotism are used to bring these schemes to success. His most colossal scheme perhaps was when he acquired the atomising element known as Nihilite, and threatened to destroy London unless he was paid a ransom of One Million. This adventure is related in "The Union Jack" No. 1290 entitled "Hands Up, London!" - one of Ferraro's very few appearances in this Sexton Blake weekly paper.

Ferraro is no stay-at-home, for Blake has chased him across Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Africa is especially a favourite territory for his adventures.

The wily doctor has been married at least twice! In a very early story in "The Sexton Blake Library" No. 246 (First Series) entitled "The Werewolf of Elphinstone" he married the girl whom we are led to believe is the innocent heroine, a Miss Alfrida Carney. Several years later he married Miss Helen Dal, an American woman aviator (see S.B.L. 2nd Series No.176 "The Atlantic Mail Robbery"). Did the author forget the first wife, or assume that readers would forget? Or did the first one die?

Most of the Ferraro stories ended on a set pattern. Ferraro eludes capture, and later sends Blake a letter explaining what happened since their last meeting.

The Doc had a very good run. I believe the last story in which he appeared was in S.B.L. No.610 (2nd series) "The Mystery of the Missing Doctor". I don't know whether this was an original or a reprint.

Coutts Brisbane was not only master of the character series type, but was equally brilliant at the "complete" type. Among the best of these were U.J. No.1242 "The Dyed Rats", 1336 "One Hundred Years After" (Police Centenary), 1352 "The Gas Ring Mystery", 1367 "The Judgment Men" and 1462 "The White Black".

Some of the complete stories featured a young Chinese, Ah Wo, whom I resented because he took Tinker's rightful place. Brisbane also wrote a few stories featuring Gunge Dass (See William Colcombe's article in C.D. No.6). He contributed too to "The Boy's Friend Library". He often used the alias "Reid Whitley"; in fact the Ah Wo stories were under this name.

His style of writing was lively, natural, breezy, occasionally flavoured by bursts of schoolboyish "oaths" such as "Geminie", "Jehosaphat" etc. Despite this he was also master of gripping atmosphere. Blake was always portrayed as the man of action rather than the dreamer. Nothing here is the Sherlock Holmes dressing-gown stuff. Adventure and colour predominate and detection was of the physical and scientific type rather than deep theorising.

Brisbane's favourite Yard Man was Inspector Harker, and there was a real friendly spirit existing between him and the Baker Street pair.

WANTED: Aldine original Penny Turpins, Duvals, Robin Hoods, etc. Several Turpins available for Exchange. E.R.Landy, 4, Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

He had an extensive knowledge of ships, travel and animals, and all are featured a good deal in his stories. In one of his best (S.B.L. 2nd Series No. 156 "The Crook Explorer") the central idea concerned a hidden valley in Africa which was a kind of natural Zoo.

In my opinion Cutts Brisbane was one of the really great Blake authors, and his best work could rank with the best any British or American thriller author has produced.

If its Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, Sexton Blakes, or any other papers you're after, send your wants to WILLIAM MARTIN, 93, Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10. ('Phone - Willesden, 4474).

Always a large selection in stock - both early and late numbers. If I hav'nt what you want, names are put on a waiting list and dealt with in strict rotation. Satisfaction guaranteed.

WANTED: Boys Realms, Boys Magazines, Old Series Nelson Lees, 1920 Holiday annual, or any duplicates you have to spare. Exchanges welcomed for any books.

FOR SALE: 2nd and 3rd Series, Nelson Lees, 6d each; Holiday Annuals 1925-26-27-28.

H.A. Smith, Scole, Diss, Norfolk.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB! Collectors, why not Join! If you can't attend meetings, be a postal member. All information given regarding meetings.

Mrs. Eileen Whiter, Secretary, 706, Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.

WANTED: In good condition and original covers - Henderson's Wild West Library, Nos. 163, 179, 180, 263, 271, 277, 278, 279, 280, 282, 284. Henderson's Nugget Library, Nos. 19, 20, 89, 105, 127, 138, 139. Henderson's Lion Library, Nos. 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 20. Henderson's Rob Roy Library, Nos. 1, 2, 9, 11. Gem, No. 641. Magnet, Nos. 160, 193, 164, 171, 229, 265, 270, 281, 282, 288, 289, 292, 293, 294, 297, 299, 308, 3328, 342, 383.

John Medcraft, 64, Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.

Title Curiosities: In 1901 there appeared in the Boys Friend a serial entitled "Beyond the Eternal Ice" by Sidney Drew. Two or three years later another serial with exactly the same title was published in the Boys Leader. It was written by Raymond Lee, and "For King or Jaiser" ran in the Big Budget (Donovan Mart), to be followed years later by "Kaiser or King", a John Tregellis serial in the Boys Friend.

Post War Xmas at Baker Street

By H. M. Bond.

Sexton Blake, world famed criminologist, yawned, stretched his legs and reached for his tobacco pouch.

"Well, laddie," he said, stuffing his blackened old briar with his own special mixture, "I'm really looking forward to Christmas this year. It is going to be an interesting experience."

Tinker, who had been looking through a copy of the latest "Collectors' Digest", looked up and grinned.

"You're dead right, gov'nor," he replied, "It will be quite a unique meeting or I miss my guess. Think what it will mean to have old Ruff Hanson toting Willy and Wally again. And it'll be a treat to have old Purvale here again. It must be years since he visited us."

Blake nodded.

"It was well before the war, I think" he agreed, "But I know that Page was rather cut up when poor John Brandon passed away and I did hear that he had gone over to the States to see what life was like for the other half. But he's a good fellow. Do you remember that Christmas when we did the Charles Dickens act, Tinker?"

"You mean when you played Sidney Carton and I was old Tupman," grinned Tinker. "I sure do, gov. And I can picture old Couttsy in his make-up right now."

"Those were great days," said Blake reminiscently. "I often wonder if our lives, or our cases for that matter, will ever be as exciting again. Somehow there does not seem to be the right sort of cases these days. Too much of this assault and battery business. Just think of the tricky problems old Huxton Rymer and George Marsden Plummer used to set us. To tell you the truth, Tinker, I am getting a bit bored."

"You'll have to do like the Saint, gov'nor," suggested his assistant. "He seems to be having a hectic time over the other side of the pond."

Blake relit his pipe and grunted.

At that moment the telephone bell rang and Tinker picked up the receiver.

"Hullo," he said, "Who is it, please? Who? Bones? Moans? Oh, Jones! One of the large family from over the Border, eh? Oh Caesar! I'm sorry I didn't get you right. How are you? What have you been doing this past ten years?"

"Who the dickens is it, Tinker," called Blake. "You are talking in riddles, lad, don't beat about the bush."

Tinker smiled and looked at his master. "You'll never guess who this is, gov. Hold on a minute, please."

"Who IS it?" snapped Blake.

"Julius Jones," murmured his assistant without further ado.

"Julius Jones of the 'Daily Radio.'"

Blake lifted his eyebrows. "That old warhorse," he exclaimed, jumping up and grabbing the phone. "Hulloa, Julius - what's to do?"

The voice that spoke to Blake over the 'phone had a distinctly Celtic accent as might be well imagined seeing that the Editor of the well known "Daily Radio" hailed from the Land of the Leek - Wales.

"Page," said Julius Jones, "You remember Derek Page, our special reporter?"

"Do I?" replied the detective, "How could I forget him? Is he there? I understand that he is in, or has been, in the U.S.A."

"He's back, look you," cried Julius excitedly, "He's just been in to see me and says he is on his way to you."

"Sounds as if something is afoot then," exclaimed Blake, "I wonder what the trouble-maker has stirred up now."

"Well Mun", said the "Radio" man, "I thought I'd prepare you for his arrival at Baker Street, Blake - it will not be such a shock - indeed to goodness."

"Any idea what he has-----" started Blake.

Brrr---Brrrr---Brrrr.

The door bell rang insistently and the next moment Blake heard voices from below stairs through the half opened door of his consulting room.

"He's here, Jones," he called into the 'phone, "Thanks a lot and cheerio."

Dropping the receiver into its hook he dashed to the top of the stairs just in time to see a well dressed figure ascending. In a moment the figure had reached the landing and Blake held out his hand enthusiastically.

"Splash Page, by all that's wonderful!" he exclaimed, "How are you, old fellow? How glad I am to see you again."

The brilliant reporter of the "Radio" grasped the detective's outstretched hand equally enthusiastically and his grasp was firm.

"Blake, old fellow," he gasped, "It really is you - I had a horrible feeling that you might be away for Christmas. After all, it is a bit of a cheek barging in here on Christmas Eve."

"Come on in," cried Blake, "Tinker's here - hey laddie! Look who's here! Tinker rose from his chair a trifle dazed, for to tell the truth he had been a bit bewildered by his master's sudden dash from the room.

"Splash," he cried, "Gosh, it's good to see you again - just like old times." Derek "Splash" Page grasped Tinker's hand and shook it until Blake's young assistant gasped "Hey - mind my arm, old war horse."

And so it was that in a few minutes three old friends were seated comfortably around the fire chatting away like wildfire, with a fourth equally famous friend occasionally opening the door and asking "hanything helse, sir?" - to wit, Mrs. Martha Bardell.

"Where have you been all these years, 'Splash?'" asked Blake, offering the "Radio" man his cigarette case.

"Oh, all over the show," replied "Splash" with a smile. "I've been in the States most though."

"I often wondered what had happened to you," said the detective, "and wondered if you had survived the war."

"Oh, I survived it well enough," said Page. "I did a few jobs in the Far East, you know, but was never much bothered."

The Baker Street pair grinned at each other. They knew "Splash Page" all right.

"But," continued Page, "I haven't come here to tell you about myself, but to say that I think I have a pleasant surprise for you."

"Indeed," said Blake, "Any sort of surprise would be welcome in these dull days."

Page grinned. "How'd you like to meet old Rymer again, Blake?" he asked.

"Rymer," exclaimed the detective, "you mean Huxton Rymer?"

"No other," replied the reporter. "And Plummer too!"

Blake sat up straight in his chair. Plummer! Even now that name stirred him as few others did or ever had. "Is he still alive then?"

"Very much so, old man," laughed Page, "and you'll see him to-morrow too."

"Will I?" gasped the surprised sleuth, "and pray how will that come about, 'Splash?'"

"Because there is going to be a sort of re-union party right here in this household, that is if you can manage such a thing."

"Come clean, you newshound," gasped Tinker, who had been silent for a few minutes, "What the deuce have you arranged, you old so and so?"

And so "Splash" Page unfolded an amazing story of how he had spent a couple of years rounding up all the old adversaries of Blake's and arranging for them all to be in London for this particular Christmas Day.

"And I've met 'em all to-day," he concluded triumphantly.

"And they'll be here tomorrow?" gasped Blake. "My word, Page - you'd better have a chat with Mrs. Bardell. Methinks her larder is a bit empty."

"Bust that part of it," cried "Splash" waving his hand impatiently. "I've arranged for bags of grub to be here for the reunion."

"But what - what - what-----" spluttered Tinker. "Gosh, we'll have a house full of crooks and murderers."

"Well - a few of 'em are retired now," explained the reporter, "although I wouldn't put a little bit of dirty work beyond one or two of 'em. But only if it were put in their way, mind you."

Sexton Blake looked properly bewildered. "Well," he said, "It'll be a bit of a change to meet the old rogues again - in fact, it will be a bit of a treat seeing that Ruff Hanson and R.S.V.P. are also here."

"Are they, by jove," cried "Splash" Page enthusiastically. "That'll be great. Forces for good and evil all in one room, eh?"

And the three fell into discussion re the arrival of the band of old friends and foes to Baker Street on Christmas afternoon. And still that rather stout old housekeeper kept "popping" in to see if there was, as Sam Costa puts it, "something".

End of Part I.

WANTED: Boys Friend 3d Libraries, particularly Martin Clifford, Clarke Hook, Sexton Blakes, Magnets, Nos.1 and 2 only; Chums bound Annuals, Volumes 3, 4 and 8. F.Osborn, 24, Harpur Street, Bedford.

INTERESTED IN all Double Numbers of any Paper, all Amalgamated Press Publications 1919-1924. Boys Comic Library, Hendersons Nugget Library, Lot O' Fun, Comic Life, Comic Cuts, Jester, Funny Wonder, Chips, etc for Jan 1913-Dec.1915. T.Waine, 3 Croft Lane, Hollins, Whitefield, Lancs.

Post-War Christmas at Baker Street

Part II

When Sexton Blake invited me to call in at Baker Street on Christmas Day I am sure that he did not even dream that such a galaxy of characters would be there to greet me and I must confess that when I rang that door bell for the third time I little realised that I should be treated to such a great surprise. I knew, of course, that one or two celebrities of the Blake world would be there and I was looking forward to meeting with the burly gentleman with the famous cauliflower ear, The Honourable Ronald Sturges Vereker Purvale, to say nothing of the American detective who had been so often featured in the Gwyn Evans Christmas stories, Ruff Hanson. It would not have surprised me much to meet up with such people as Big Bill Withers, "Splash" Page, or Superintendent Claudius Vennér, but when I had been invited up to the spacious lounge on the opposite side of the passage to the famous consulting room and saw the crowd of people seated around the extended table, I felt as though I should "pass out" from sheer excitement. Tinker, who had met me at the doorway after Mrs. Bardell had answered the ring, caught my arm as I passed through the door of the lounge, whispered in my ear:

"I think I'd better point out a few important personages, Mr. Bond."

"I think you'd better," I agreed, feeling very nervous, "I had no idea that this crowd was going to be here - and I certainly had no wish to butt in just as you were all going to sit down to Christmas dinner."

"Think nothing of it, old man," smiled Tinker. "One more won't make a heck of a difference." He clutched at my arm tightly. "See that fellow with the Imperial over there?"

My eyes followed his outstretched finger to a rather striking looking individual who was chatting with a charming blonde.

"Yes," I breathed, "Who is it?"

"The chap you've written about many times in the C.D.," said Tinker, "Doctor Huxton Rymér - and the dame by his side is L. but you can surely guess who she is."

"Not a clue," I answered, "Who is she anyway?"

"The new 1948 model representing Mary Trent," whispered Tinker.

I gasped. I could not help it. I had imagined Miss Trent to be a very different type of young lady. Not that she could be so young after all these years.

"Goodness me," I said weakly, "And who is that other bearded chap over there?"

"Plummer," answered Tinker briefly, "And Vali is sat beside him."

"But-but-but——" I stammered, "How - how the deuce can all these crooks and vagabonds be here - in Sexton Blake's own room?"

"Ask old "Splash" Page," said Tinker nodding his head towards the handsome young man who was busy fixing up a sprig of mistletoe over the door. "He rounded them up and brought 'em here and believe me, we were as surprised as you, old man."

"Hallo, Mr. Bond," a deep voice spoke in my ear at that moment, and turning I found the famous detective at my elbow.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Blake," I greeted, "My word, you HAVE given me a shock to-day."

"We are just about to sit down to Christmas dinner," smiled Blake. "Will you join us, Mr. Bond?"

"Well, I'm supposed to get back to the wife and kiddies," I admitted, "But this is the chance of a lifetime, isn't it - I should never forgive myself if I missed this chance, Sir."

"Quite right, quite right," agreed Blake. "I'll announce you."

"Please don't do that, Sir," I said with alarm. "I'd rather sit unobtrusively and watch all that's going on."

"Nonsense," laughed Blake. "Ladies and Gentlemen - just a moment, please."

The chatting ceased and all eyes were turned in our direction. A thought ran through my mind. I had relaxed in my armchair at home many times and read about the people seated all around that huge table and now I was "on view" to them. I could see Huxton Rymer staring at me as though I were some interesting type of bacteria. I blushed slightly as the deep violet eyes of Vali Meta-Vali gazed at me inquiringly.

"I should like to introduce a rather important arrival," Blake was saying. "A gentleman who knows you all but who is a stranger to you. Meet Mr. Bond, a reader of our adventures for many a year and editor of a section of a magazine devoted to us. I say "us" for, while the said section is called "Blakians" after myself, it is no less devoted to the affairs of you all."

I heard voices saying, "Pleased to meet you," and "How are you," and then someone started to clap. After a round of what I considered rather unnecessary applause the chatting started all over again and I was invited to sit down at the end of the large table, while Blake and Tinker made their way to the head. "Splash" Page had fixed up his mistletoe and made his way to his seat and Rymer had pulled out Mary Trent's chair and settled down beside her a few places from where I sat.

The scene was gay and altogether delightful. Holly and mistletoe hung everywhere and decorations which were obviously pre-war adorned the walls. The heavily laden table seemed to glitter with glass and cutlery and the blazing fire was beginning to throw shadows on the walls as the afternoon dusk seemed to creep into the room. The chatting of the men, occasionally interrupted by peals of laughter from the women seemed to lend an air of gaiety to the whole scene and it was very difficult to imagine that on many occasions the man at the head of the table had fought life and death struggles with many of those seated around him. Rymer and Plummer both looked in a reflective mood and I wondered what their thoughts were. Then a glorious moment arrived!

The door opened and Mrs. Bardell appeared, accompanied by a thin looking individual whom I had no difficulty in placing as her sister-in-law Mrs. Mary Ann Cluppins. They were both laden, but Mrs. Bardell was the central figure at that moment, for it was she who carried the turkey, although it was as yet covered over on the huge dish that seemed a featherweight to the buxom housekeeper.

"Ah ha" cried Blake, "Here come the bird - and it is a beauty too. Reared and fattened on my own farm."

I listened in amazement. Blake had a farm? Well, well. Wonders would never cease.

Cheers greeted the uncovering of the large turkey and Mrs. Bardell looked with pride at her cooking. Then her eyes ranged around the crowd at the table.

"Wich I wished to wish you all the condiments of the season," she said, "and I 'opes as 'ow this yer bird will be a tender'un."

At that moment "Splash" Page jumped up from the table and shouted, "Three cheers for Mrs. B., everyone," and catching the old lady under her arms he waltzed her to the spot where he had placed the mistletoe and planted a kiss on her cheek.

"Ho, Mr. Pige," murmured Mrs. Bardell, "You are a one - always the one for a lark."

"Why, 'tis ten or more years since last I met you," chanted the irrepressible reported. "I've waited all that time for that kiss, you old dear."

Mrs. B. Blushed and Mary Ann Cluppins eyed her sister-in-law anxiously. She seemed to be thinking - "Martha is a bit fast in her old age."

In a few minutes Blake had said grace and the carving had begun. And it was not long ere we were all agreeing with Mrs. Bardell that it was indeed a tender'un.

I shall never forget that Christmas dinner. Not only was it an excellent one but the company around me were all so interesting and so well known to me in the sense that I had read so much about them. I chatted with Vali-Mata-Vali, who had the most attractive accent I had ever heard, and I had quite a shock when I spoke to her partner in crime. George Marsden Plummer was the essence of suaveness and his manners were irreproachable. Well could I imagine the ease with which he had talked his way into various schemes. And Rymer was the perfect doctor. I thought his manner was rather clipped, but he was an interesting character and although I did not have the nerve to ask him anything about his clashes with his present host, I rather gathered that he had a very large soft spot for the detective. His partner Mary Trent was altogether a charming creature and one could imagine her being a big influence on the somewhat crooked doctor.

Well, time passed and we had stories and anecdotes from many of those present, not the least interesting coming from that well known aristocrat-cum-sesdog, R.S.V.P. or, Mr. Purvale to you if you like. His henchmen, Wibley and Withers, were always willing to bolster up the accounts of his clashes and I had to smile now and again when Mr. Purvale caught the eye of Inspector Coutts who seemed to silently dispute some of the stories related. Officialdom was represented by only three, the other two being the dapper Superintendent Venner and his silent but ever watchful "handmaiden" Sergeant Belford. As the evening wore on fresh figures presented themselves to the company, one of these being that striking individual Rupert Waldo, reformed again, but by the look of him ready to break into crime at any moment. I wondered what HE thought of his successor Norman Conquest - not a Blake character, but darn near it.

Every now and then something would brush past me. It was Pedro the dear old bloodhound. A piece of holly had been fixed onto his collar and he looked a very bewildered dog indeed. First he'd sniff at Plummer and give a low growl; then he would eye Rymer with a sort of canine misgiving which only went to show that the animal knew his stuff. I could imagine his doggy mind saying, "H'm, wonder why the boss has all these wrong'uns here today."

Many things were discussed that evening. The old Gwyn Evans Christmas Spirit. The days when U.J. double numbers adorned the book-stalls. Mrs. Bardell's Christmas Pudding. Remember it? And the time she was kidnapped? When Rymer and Mary Trent had been the Christmas guests of Blake once before, at the time when the glamorous Yvonne had been with him at Baker Street. I wondered then what HAD happened to Yvonne. Did Blake still think of her? He must have done that Christmas day, but were his thoughts more on the equally attractive Roxane?

And so it went until at last I had to excuse myself on the grounds that I HAD to get home to the family - and this was quite legitimate, for the wife would most certainly wonder where I was. It had been a unique Christmas day though and I wondered if ever the scene would be repeated. Were all those beloved characters gathered together for the last time? Would Blake ever clash with Rymer or Plummer again. But it was Christmas, not the time to think of clashes and bloodshed. Peace and goodwill had reigned supreme that day and I hoped that even if clashes did come once again that they would be the friendly ones which we had learned to expect from such as G. H. Teed and Gwyn Evans. The crooks had their good points too, you know! As I walked down Baker Street that evening a thousand thoughts ran through my mind as I hummed "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen, let nothing you dismay."

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Your candid opinion is requested,

for future reference, regarding which

articles you like the best, plus all

other comments with regard to this

Annual.

Ed.

A Look at the "Libraries"

By Herbert Leckenby.

One of the most popular features in our first Annual was the list of Boys' Weeklies; this year we have endeavoured to follow up with some account of the "Libraries". By this we mean those publications which appeared two or more together at monthly, or longer, intervals. It has been a somewhat formidable task, requiring quite a lot of research, and we do not claim it is a complete list. We do think however, we have succeeded in getting the main ones, those most sought after by collectors.

One of our greatest difficulties was in fixing the starting and finishing dates, for the publishers, in the majority of cases, had, for some reason, a reluctance to provide that information. The Aldines were a good example. With them we were able to trace some of the information through advertisements in other of their publications, but even here the year was often missing. Possibly an editor in 1898 never thought there would be people interested 50 years later.

It would appear that James Henderson & Sons, that grand old firm, publishers of popular papers for several decades of the 19th century, were first in the field with their Budget Story Books. They were all reprints of serials which had appeared in "Nuggets", "Young Folks", "Weekly Budget" etc. They were published at 3d and were of handy pocket size, about that of the "Boys' Friend Library".

Much later appeared the "Wild West Library" which, as the title indicates, concentrated on stories of Buffalo Bill and other heroes of the prairies. The early numbers had a yellow paper cover, and consisted of 48 pages of close print; good value for a penny. Then they dropped to 32 pages, with larger type and the cover in colours on white paper. As will be seen, the "Wild West" had quite a good run.

Hendersons also published the neat little "Nugget Library" consisting of stories of all types. R.A.H. Goodyear, known to all readers of the Annual, contributed quite a lot of ideal school stories.

The first to go in for this kind of reading for boys in a big way, however, was the Aldine Publishing Company. Oh the Aldines! Arch purveyor of bloods! It was they who introduced Deadwood Dick to England, a name synonymous with "penny dreadful". In the last decade of the 19th century they almost had the field to themselves so far as the "Libraries" were concerned; "Boys' First-Rate Pocket Library", "Tip Top", "Detective Tales", "O'er Land and Sea", "Invention, Travel and Adventure". The great majority of the stories in these, if not all, were American reprints, so British writers for boys had a thin time where the Aldine Co. was concerned. Most of above mentioned would appear to have started in 1887 or 1888 and the stories were reprinted again and again, often with a change of titles. Not only did they reappear in the "Libraries", but also in their weeklies, "Half Holiday" and "Cheerful".

The "First Rates" consisted of 32 pages, about 8½" x 5½", with a somewhat crude coloured cover. They seemed to have got off to a rather mild start, for these were the first four titles: No. 1 "Those Troublesome Brothers, Tom Briggs Major and Phil Briggs Miner". No. 2, "Our School and all about the Boys", No. 3 "Sam Skylark" or "The Middies of the Gunroom". No. 4 "Friendless Fred", a story of London streets. If the titles were anything to go by the stories might have appeared in the "Boys' Own Paper". But soon appeared titles like these:— No. 10 "Morgen the Freebooter", No. 18 "Doctor Deathgrip", No. 20 "The Wild Girl of the Coast" and No. 22 "The Merciless Mutineer".

Deadwood Dick made his first appearance in No. 34, the title being: "Deadwood Dick, the Outlaw of the Black Hills". Others which followed were, No. 35 "Double Diggers" or Deadwood Dick's Defiance, No. 38 "The Phantom Miner" or Deadwood Dick's Bonanza, and No. 39 "Deadwood Dick in Danger" or "The Masked Terror". About half the first 200 numbers dealt with this character.

The "O'er Land and Seas" were the same page size as the "First Rates" but ran to 64 pages and cost 2d., and the stories were of a similar type, though there were, perhaps, more yarns of the sea and buccaneers. The first four were: No. 1 "Buffalo Bill, His Life and Adventures". No. 2 "The Comrade Scout of Buffalo Bill", No. 3 "The Cabin Boy of the Polly Ann" or The Gardens of Paradise, and No. 4 "Mexican Joe".

A few other typical titles were, No. 34 "The Demon Duellist" or the League of Steel. No. 37 "Captain Freelance the Buccaneer". No. 43 "Velvet Hand" or the Iron Grip of Injun Dick, No. 43 "The Pirate Priest" and No. 122 "Fire Eye the Sea Hyena". Seductive titles those!

Now the Detective Tales. These were also 2d., about 7" x 5" and 96 pages. Again they were American reprints, and presented an extraordinary assortment of sleuths. For example, the first four: No. 1 "Brant Adams, the Emperor of Detectives", No. 2 "Old Stonewall the Shadower", No. 3 "The Dog Detective", No. 4 "The Combination Lock Mystery" or "Little Lightning". And there followed, No. 16 "The Masked Detective", No. 29 "Kate Scott, the Decoy Detective", No. 30 "The Jew Detective", No. 31 "The Demon Detective", No. 44 "Red Light Will, the River Detective" and No. 54 "Lady Kate, the Dashing Lady Detective". Plenty of variety there, but none gained the reputation of Sexton Blake or Nelson Lee.

A few words about the "Tip Top" will suffice. Its page size was only 6" x 4" and the price 1d. The stories differed little from the three Libraries already mentioned. I have no record of the early numbers, but in 1899 the following appeared: No. 262 "Headlight Harry's Hunt", No. 268 "Crackshort Daisy's Drop" and No. 269 "Gold King of Weird Canyon".

Between March 1900 and September 1902 only thirty-two "Tip Tops" appeared, so it seems evident they had had their day, and, as a matter of fact, there were only eight more numbers.

Perhaps the most interesting of this group of Aldine "Libraries" was the one bearing the cumbersome title, "Invention, Travel and Adventure", popularly known as "Frank Reads". Once again they were of American origin and across the herring pond their counterparts are much sought after to this day. This Aldine production was the same size and price

as the "First Rate". The covers bore the slogan "Jules Verne Outdone" and they were certainly remarkable examples of inventive genius, for they told of steam men, electric horses, and later the covers portrayed weird looking air ships and fantastic submarines. The first four numbers were, No. 1 "Frank Reade, Junior and His New Steam Man", No. 2 "Frank Reade with his New Steam Man in No Man's Land", No. 3 "Frank Reade with his New Steam Man in Central America". No. 4 "Frank Reade with his New Steam Man in Mexico". Later on Frank Reade had to share the Library with Jack Wright, but the two were really one, for the type of story was exactly the same. Typical examples of later stories were the following, published on April 9th 1904: No. 253 "Jack Wright's Terror of the Seas", No. 254 "Jack Wright's Prairie Yacht", No. 255 "Frank Reade's Electric Horse", No. 256 "Frank Reade's Electric Team". Some years later there were two attempts to revive the Library, one at a halfpenny, but both were very short-lived.

Now comes a character around whom possibly more stories have been written than anyone else with the exception of Sexton Blake; - Buffalo Bill! There's a difference between the two, of course, for the hero of the plains actually lived, but if he had been through all the adventures placed to his credit he would have been the world's oldest man. The Aldine Co. alone published hundreds, though many of them made several appearances probably. It is almost impossible to give an authentic record of the various editions published at 1d, 2d and 4d. However, the first started on October 7th 1899 and the first few were:- No. 1 "Red Man's Hate" or "Buffalo Bill's peril in the Far West". No. 2 "Silver Scalp" or "How Buffalo Bill solved a Mystery of the Prairies". No. 3 "Hawkeye", or "Buffalo Bill's Ride across the Rockies". No. 4 "No Quarter" or "Buffalo Bill's Trail on the Apache Marauders". From then on, to well into the 1920's, stories of the famous scout were being published by Aldines, but the history of them is too involved to be recorded here, so I will pass on to a new phase.

With the advent of the 20th century the Aldine Co. turned to the English scene and produced Libraries dealing with characters glamorous - or notorious - in its history. Robin Hood, Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, Jack Sheppard, Captain Kidd, etc. The covers adorning these were a great advance on those already mentioned so far as being examples of colour printing was concerned. The Dick Turpins and Claude Duvals especially were notable for their picturesqueness, even if the scenes depicted thereon were gory and hair raising. Anyway, it is a fact that to-day some collectors cherish them for their covers alone.

The Robin Hood Library was first in the field and the first four numbers, published on October 19th 1901 were, No. 1 "Sweet Liberty or Death". No. 2 "Robin Hood and the Tyrant of Nottingham", No. 3 "The Fighting Friar of Sherwood Forest" and No. 4 "Robin Hood to the Rescue". The Robin Hoods consisted of 32 pages $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x $8\frac{1}{2}$ ". The covers had a yellow background and most of the illustrations were drawn by that busy artist of the day, Robert Prowse, and F. W. Boyington, with J. Arch appearing occasionally. Several authors shared the 88 stories including Alfred S. Burrage, H. Philpott Wright, Charles E. Brand, Escott Lynn, Singleton Pound, A. W. Bradley, G. C. Glover, Ogilvie Mitchell and

Roderick Dare. Round about 1912 there was an attempt to revive them, starting with the original No. 11. At first glance the new edition appeared identical with the original, but there were certain differences, the authors' names were not given, a plain type heading took the place of a picture one, and the advertisements, of course, were different.

A few years after the end of the First Great War the stories appeared again, at 2d., but in an abridged form and many of the titles changed. Even though they were the same stories to those who remembered the originals, they had nothing of the same appeal.

The Dick Turpins, evidently the most successful in this class of library, for they ran to 182 numbers, first appeared on April 5th 1902. They were slightly larger than the Robin Hoods and had 24 pages. Dick Turpin! What a name to conjure with. Gallant, handsome Dick, astride bonny Black Bess as displayed on the gorgeous cover of the Aldines. What a pity history declares he was a pock-marked, undersized common horse thief. However, say the historians what they will, Dick Turpin thrilled generations of boys and the Aldines helped with the first four numbers the titles of which were:- No. 1 "Driven From Home"; or, Dick and Black Bess Seek Fame and Fortune. No. 2 "The Masked Man of Mystery" or, A story of Strange Deeds. No. 3 "The Secret of the Old Mint"; or, Dick Rights an Old Wrong. No. 4 "The Night Riders of Bagshot Heath". All four were written by Charlton Lea, a prolific writer of that type of story. He, in fact, wrote more than a hundred of the Turpins, then Stephen H. Agnew took over. He wrote the rest, with the exception of three which had the name of Jack Tempest attached to them, though who he was nobody seems to know. Agnew's stories were even more fantastic than Charlton Lea's. No. 137 "The River of Fire" or, the trail of Ten Men in Red, and No. 142 "The King of Terrors" or, "The Sensation of London", were good examples. Robert Prowse did most of the illustrations.

The first four Claude Duvals appeared on October 4th 1902. They were: No. 1 "The Sword of Vengeance" or How Claude Duval and Prince Rupert Became Friends. No. 2 "Strike for the King" or, The Black Masked Cavalier. No. 3 "In the Track of Death" or Claude Duval's Fight for the Royal Standard. No. 4 "The Fall of the Axe" or, Claude Duval Takes to the King's Highway. The gallant Claude, who had the reputation of dancing with lovely ladies on the King's highway, cut even a more dashing figure than Dick Turpin, and the covers were Robert Prowse at his very best. Charlton Lea again wrote the great majority of them, if not all. They were fine, thrilling yarns, yet, for some reason, there were only 48 of them.

The Jack Sheppards; starting in 1904, ended with the 24th. The page size was slightly larger than that of the Duvals and Turpins and not a whit behind as hair raisers. They started off with No. 1 "The King of Rogues", No. 2 "Gallowsbirds" or, The Thief Taker Meets His Match, No. 3 "Through Bolts and Bars" or, Jack Sheppard's First Escape from Old Newgate Gaol, and No. 4 "A Thief to Catch" or, Galloping Dick Swears a Terrible Revenge.

May 24th 1904 brought the Spring Heeled Jacks, outdoing all that had gone before, as will be seen by these alluring titles: No. 1 "Man or Field" or, The First Appearance of Spring Heeled Jack. No. 2

"A Mystery of Mysteries" or Some Extraordinary Doings of Spring Heeled Jack. No. 3 "The Terror of the Land" or Spring Heeled Jack at Home and Abroad. No. 4 "The Shadow of Fate" or Step by Step in the Track of Vengeance. What thrills for the boys of 1904! Yet, strange to relate, there were no more than a dozen stories and Charlton Lea wrote them.

One other "Library" of this type remains to be mentioned, "The Red Rover". It started on October 17th 1903 and finished soon after, for there were only eight of them in all, and they had titles like these: No. 1 "The Vengeance of Blackbeard" or, the coming of Don Salvo Quinave. No. 2 "Blackbeard, the Terror of the Seas", or, The Cruise of the Avenger. No. 3 "Marooned by Blackbeard" or, The Betrayal of Jack Skye. No. 4 "Blackbeard's Terrible Triumph" or, The Doom of Salvo Quinado. Of a truth, full-blooded pirate yarns, yet only eight of them! It would appear tastes were changing.

In 1908 came two new libraries of a different type, "The Boys' Own", a 3d venture, probably an attempt to compete with the already successful Amalgamated Press "Boy's Friend Library". "The Boy's Own" was similar in size and appearance, and the great majority of the stories, if not all, were reprints. Henry T. Johnson wrote the first four, "Three Jolly Britons", "The Scarlet Star", "The Almost Men" and "The Gladiator of the Arena", and many others which followed, including the famous "Pride of the Ring" which, years before, had run as a serial in the Harmsworth "Funny Wonder".

Though this library seems to have been fairly successful at first, it could not compete with the "Boy's Friend". By the time the First Great War broke out, some 93 numbers had appeared. Its title was then changed to "The Briton's Own Library" but in this form it had a very short life.

The "Diamond Library" was a kind of 1d. edition of "The Boy's Own" and similar too to Henderson's "Nuggets". With the coming of the 1914 war its title was changed to "The Diamond War Library" but once again war stories did not catch on and "the Diamond" also became a casualty.

When Peace came the Aldine Co. attempted to revive old "Libraries" and start new ones, but apparently the star of this once famous concern was setting, for it fell on hard times and actually went out of business. Newnes bought some of the copyrights. They revived, among others, the Dick Turpins at 3d., but they had nothing like the appeal of the originals.

I have devoted a good deal of space to the Aldines, for hitherto not a lot has been written about them, yet they once were extremely popular and do deserve a place in the sun.

The decline of the Aldines was probably due to the rise of the mighty House of Harmsworth, later known as "The Amalgamated Press". Having launched numerous papers for boys they entered the "Libraries" field and in September 1906 the first number of "The 3d. Boy's Friend Library" appeared on the bookstalls. It was a story of Jack, Sam and Pete, famous characters of the day. A second, dealing with the same three appeared a little later, then two numbers came along together, No. 3 being another Jack, Sam and Pete, and No. 4 a reprint of a popular "Boy's Friend" serial, "Birds of Prey" a tale of Nelson Lee by Maxwell Scott.

"The Boy's Friend Library" was destined to become the most successful "Library" of all time with the possible exception of "The Sexton Blake". For a time two numbers came out together, monthly, then three, later four, and, for a time even five. The early numbers consisted of 144 pages, soon dropping to 120, printed right across the page. Some of the stories were reprints of serials and some of the covers, especially the early ones, were very attractive.

"The Boy's Friend Library" ran on unperturbed throughout the First Great War, though, of course, the pages were reduced to 64, and the price increased to 4d.

By May 1925 no less than 764 numbers had appeared. The following month a new series started, but actually it was simply a question of re-numbering. This series was almost as successful as the first, for, by 1940, 724 stories had been published. There were some signs, however, that it was faltering, for a few months there had been some tampering with the title, two of the stories each month being called "The Boy's Friend Bullseye Library" and the two others "The Boy's Friend Knockout Library". It would appear the idea was eventually to drop "The Boy's Friend" and continue them as "The Knockout" and "Bullseye". However, Hitler killed all that and the many others that tragic month: "The Boy's Friend" disappeared from the bookstalls for good. Well, a run of just on 34 years and 1488 numbers was an impressive record, to say the least.

Now to "The Sexton Blake Library". In some ways its story is more remarkable than that of the "B.F.L.", for every single story was centered round that famous character. I should say, of course, has been centered, for at the time of writing the "S.N.L." still appears every month, and very shortly it will actually have been running longer than the "B.F.L.", even if the total numbers are not so many.

The first number appeared in September 1915. It deserves a place in history, its title was "The Yellow Tiger" and it was written by George Hamilton Teed. What a grand start it was, for that story has certainly never been excelled since. I have particularly vivid memories of that yarn, for I read it for a second time whilst on duty at my switchboard during a Zeppelin raid on May 2nd 1916. So engrossed was I that I was almost oblivious to the bombs dropping not far away. I read it again in 1947 whilst on a visit to my colleague of Blakiana at Cardiff, and found it as absorbing as I did over 20 years earlier. So adequately has my colleague dealt with the famous "Library" in his various writings that it is unnecessary for me to say much about it here. As will be seen from the table appended, the second series started at the same time as that of the "B.F.L." and ran to 20 numbers more. The 3rd series, despite the fact that only two numbers have been issued monthly, is, at the time of writing, nearly up to its second century. It has one other distinction - the price for some years has been 7d.

The Amalgamated Press published several other successful libraries and the first Thursday in every month brought a great array of tasty covers to the counters of every enterprising bookseller. They included "The Football and Sports Library", usually three a month with over 500 in all, "The Schoolboy's Own Library", which consisted of reprints mainly

of stories of four famous schools, "The Champion" and "The Thriller", the latter a short-lived one.

Way back before we knew what "Great Wars" were, the Amalgamated Press produced another, "The Wonder Library". This specialised in reprints of serials from comics like "Chips" and "Comic Cuts". These papers published good serials in those days, yet little is known of "The Wonder Library", and I have not heard of any collector who possesses a single copy.

And here's another curious thing. In 1904 Pearson's attempted to enter the field by producing "The Big Budget Library". They had plenty of material at their disposal, for scores of rattling good serials ran in the weekly which gave the Library its name. Yet only two stories appeared: "Peril Island" by Sidney Drew, and "The Adventures of Captain Kettle Junior" by Stacey Blake. They consisted of 96 pages, each page being much larger than any of the others. Why no others followed is something of a mystery.

During the years under review many other Libraries, like Newnes Tubby Haigs and Joe Pickfords and "Lloyds Adventure" appeared, but they never made the grade, and except to very few have been long since forgotten.

So-called Libraries have sprung up here and there since the war, but the majority of them are so puerile that they are beneath contempt, and one wonders if ever again we shall see on the bookstalls, Libraries of the standard of "The Boy's Friend", "The Nuggets" the Claude Duvals, O'er Land and Sea and the rest of them we Nostalgians revere according to whether our years are twenty, thirty, or up to three score years and ten.

In concluding, I must acknowledge the valued help of John Medcroft, who went to a lot of trouble in checking the list which follows. With the benefit of his unrivalled knowledge of the earlier libraries, I think it can be said the details are as near correct as it is possible to get them.

For an enjoyable evening, join the London Old Boys' Book Club.

Write to the Secretary:-

Mrs. Whiter,
706, Lordship Lane,
Wood Green,
London, N.22.

THE "LIBRARIES" LIST

James Hendersons & Sons, Ltd.

	Total No's	From	To
Budget Story Books (3d.)	approx. 650	about 1885	-/-/1904
Wild West	284	=/1/1903	=/2/1909
Pocket Budget	11	28/4/1903	16/7/1903
Pocket Budget Library	28	23/7/1903	=/4/1904
Rob Roy	16	-/10/1903	26/4/1904
Nugget Library	330	26/10/1905	-/-1915
Young Folks Tales	325	-/9/1906	1/1/1915
Lion	28	=/6/1909	=/4/1910

Aldine Publishing Co. Ltd.

Garfield Library, 3d.	88	-/10/1886	-
Boys' First Rate	472	-/-/1887	21/10/1905
One at a Time	5	-/-/1887	-/-/1887
O'er Land and Sea, 2d.	408	-/-/1888	29/7/1905
Tip Top	328	-/1/1888	17/9/1905
Detective (2d.)	348	-/1/1889	-/2/1906
Home Library of Powerful Dramatic Tales	64	2/-/1890	-
Invention, Travel & Adventure	272	-/-/1892	-/12/1905
Buffalo Bill, 1st series	230	7/10/1897	-/-/1909
Robin Hood	88	19/10/1901	-
Dick Turpin	182	5/4/1902	-/-/1909
Claude Duval	48	4/10/1902	-/-/1906
Red Rover	8	17/10/1903	-/1/1904
Spring Heeled Jack	12	19/3/1904	24/9/1904
Jack Sheppard	24	26/11/1904	-/-/1906
Tales for Little People	approx 350	25/11/1905	-
Tip Top Detective	36	-/-/1905	-/-/1906
Diamond (1st series)	213	-/-/1906	-/-/1913
Boys' Own. 3d.	93	-/-/1908	-/-/1914
Buffalo Bill (2nd series)	approx 130	-/-/1909	-/-/1913
Black Bess	18	-/-/1909	-/-/1910
Invention, second series	32	-/-/1910	-
Boys' Comic	26	-/-/1911	-/-/1912
Buffalo Bill (3rd series) 2d.	702	-/-/1912	approx 2/1932
Diamond (2nd series)	58	-/-/1913	-/-/1915
Invention (3rd series)	12	-/-/1913	-
Britons Own	12	-/-/1914	-/-/1915
Diamond War	20	-/-/1915	-/-/1916
Buffalo Bill (4th series) 3d. & 4d.	342	-/-/1918	-/2/1932
Diamond Library (3rd series) 2d.	131	-/-/1920	-
Robin Hood (2nd series) 2d.	88	-/-/1920	-/-/1922
Dixon Brett 4d.	approx 20	-/-/1928	-

Libraries List (cont'd)

Amalgamated Press

	<u>Total No's</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Boys' Friend (1st series) 3d & 4d.	764	-/9/1906	4/5/1925
Boys' Friend (2nd series) 4d	724	3/6/1926	-/6/1940
Sexton Blake (1st series) 3d & 4d	382	20/9/1915	4/5/1925
Sexton Blake (2nd series) 4d	744	3/6/1926	-/10/1940
Sexton Blake (3rd series) 7d	180	-/11/1940	still in progress
Wonder Library 3d	14	Date unknown	
Football and Sports 4d	566	-/-/1921	-/-/1938
Schoolboys' Own	411	25/4/1925	4/6/1940
Thriller	24	-/-/1934	-/6/1935
Nugget	--	--	--

Nipper of St. Ninians

by Herbert Leckenby

Yes, ye St. Frankites - St. Ninians! Nipper spent several years there, during which he had many hair-raising adventures and quite a lot of fun long before St. Franks was heard of.

Moreover, the School was situated in Sussex (just like St. Franks) but near a little fishing village of Cleveden on the mouth of the River Dene. There was a rival School near by, but it was Gleveden Grammar School.

The first serial concerning St. Ninians was "Nipper's Schooldays" which started in the Boys Herald in 1904. It was written by Maxwell Scott, Nelson Lee's creator, as were the others which followed. Now there is a very interesting circumstance about this story for it largely concerned another ward of Nelson Lee - one Dick Starling, a one-time missing heir and discovered by Nelson Lee. The two Dicks were sent by Nelson Lee to St. Ninians to be educated.

There were three houses at the School, School House, Mr. Rant's, and Mr. Jermans. Nipper and Dick Starling were Ranters and there was of course a good deal of house rivalry. The story, however, mainly concerned attempts on Dick Starling's life, attempts which eventually brought Nelson Lee to the school as a master.

Two other serials dealing with St. Ninians were "The Captain of St. Ninians" and "The Fighting Fifth" and it also played a part in "Detective Warder Nelson Lee" a serial in the Boys Friend concerning Greystones Prison which was near the School. With the passing of St. Ninians, Dick Starling passed out too. St. Ninians never attained the prominence of St. Franks, nevertheless the boys of its day used to wait impatiently for the next instalment.

